

Spring 2002

COM Outlook Spring 2002

College of Osteopathic Medicine

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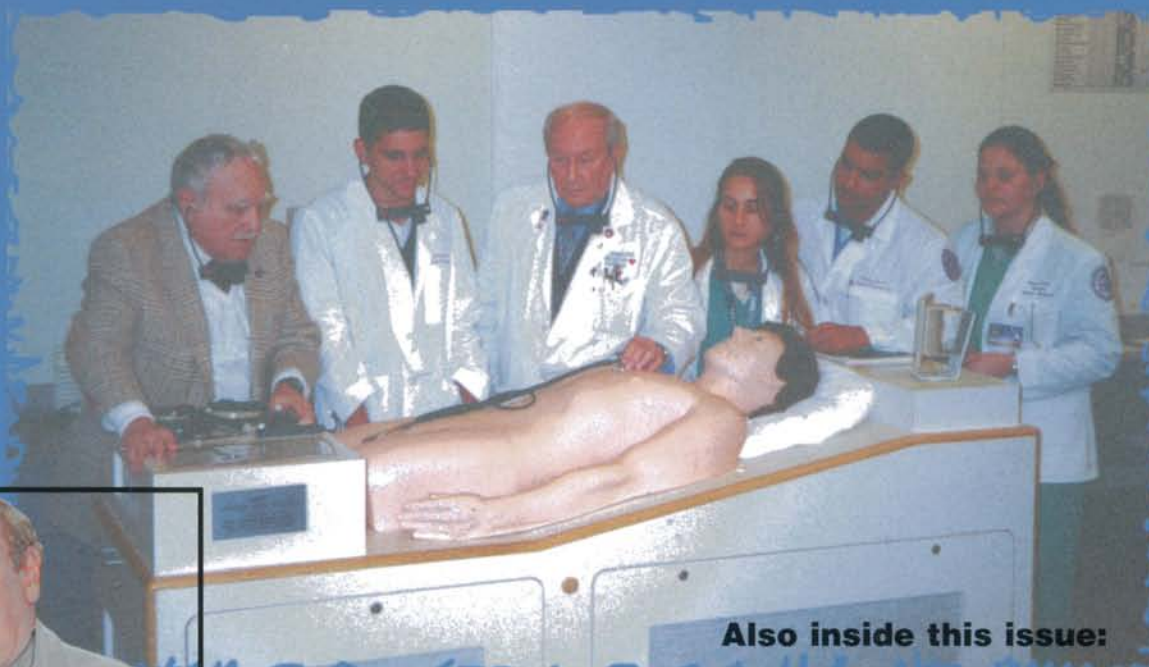
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COM Outlook

College of Osteopathic Medicine

Spring 2002
Volume 3, Number 2



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HEART OF THE MATTER:

Becoming a physician was a dream come true for internal medicine specialist Dr. A. Alvin Greber, who knew from an early age that his destiny lay in the world of sternums and stethoscopes.

Dean's Message



In today's world, where scientific and technological advances seem to occur at warp speed, it's essential that the College of Osteopathic Medicine remains on the cusp of medical education and prepares its students for a medical landscape brimming with challenge and change.

To keep pace with this wave of perpetual transformation, NSU-COM consistently evaluates and revises its curriculum to ensure that its students receive a multifaceted education that will allow them to maximize their potential and provide them with the tools to become first-rate physicians. Over the past year, we have implemented several new programs and courses—including one on bioterrorism—and modified existing classes to make them more incisive and interactive.

Because medical education continues to move away from lecture-based instruction and toward problem-based, active learning, we have established a pilot OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination) program, which utilizes standardized patients to test the clinical acumen of our students. Today's students must participate directly in the learning process and not just listen to and absorb rote facts. This is a trend that will continue to proliferate, especially since the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX) is planning to formally incorporate OSCE into its testing content in 2004.

The use of standardized patients, who are well-trained individuals or "actors" who are taught by our faculty to mimic certain symptoms and carefully evaluate the student who is examining them, will provide our students a true measure of how finely honed their clinical skills are. One of the more unique aspects of OSCE revolves around the fact that the standardized patients—and not faculty members—serve as the arbiters of the students' overall performance.

This push toward more clinically-based education is the

direction believed by most medical educators that will produce a physician who is more able to relate to the inflow of data that exists in the clinical environment and also produce the learning in the same manner in which it is used. The OSCE concept forces students to think on their feet and put into practice the knowledge and skills they have gleaned during their NSU-COM matriculation before they more fully enter the "real world" of medicine.

We've also developed improved evaluation systems within our clerkships to ensure heightened outcomes and have implemented an interactive "virtual patient" CD-ROM program that provides our students with an innovative way to enhance their diagnostic skills. The program allows students to access 74 patient cases from any computer equipped with password-protected Internet access. Once they are linked to the program, students can perform a mock examination, obtain a complete medical history, order tests, interpret X-rays and EKG's, and develop a treatment plan.

Once a case is completed, students receive a computer-generated evaluation. The appraisal (which is programmed by NSU-COM faculty) points out the strengths and weaknesses of the students' work and allows participants the benefit of seeing how a seasoned clinician would have handled the case. In addition to the 74 existing cases, the program contains an authoring tool that allows faculty members to create a range of interesting patient scenarios. The program, which ties in nicely with the college's mission to foster student self-learning, also provides the faculty with a tool to identify individual as well instructional strengths and weaknesses.

I am proud of our outstanding and experienced faculty who have taken a leadership role in ensuring that we offer our students a comprehensive and stimulating course of study in osteopathic medicine. Through our joint efforts, we are providing them an opportunity to gain a significant amount of scientific information and medical knowledge while also imparting the equally important and often-ignored skill of learning how to teach oneself over multiple decades in a rapidly changing world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O.".

Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O., Pharm.D.
Dean



HPD Executive Administration

Communiqué



*Morton Terry, D.O., M.Sc., FACOI
Chancellor*



*Fred Lippman, B.Sc., R.Ph.
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost*

Studying to be a doctor is an unrelenting commitment and the spring break interruption did little to slow the pace of our dedicated student body. The executive administration of the Health Professions Division wishes to commend Dean Anthony Silvagni and his dedicated faculty for establishing a criteria for medical education whereby our student physicians are constantly supported and stretched in their quest to excel.

As a result of the September 11 emergency response initiatives developed by NSU-COM in collaboration with the health departments of Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties, the college has formed The Task Force on Bioterrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction. The purpose of this task force is to develop plans to educate and train health professionals, first responders, and the community, as well as conduct relevant research.

Under the able leadership of EMS education and training personnel Maureen Campbell and Kevin Nugent, NSU-COM will host the Fourth Annual CPR Day on April 27. CPR Day is a joint effort between the American Heart Association and the Florida College of Emergency Physicians. The purpose of the event is to reduce the number of lives lost from cardiac death by educating people about the Chain of Survival—the four-step process of

providing treatment to victims of sudden cardiac death. NSU-COM students will oversee stroke screening evaluations by conducting blood pressure and pulse checks.

On April 26 and 27, The Health Professions Division will host A Glimpse of the Future of Health Care in America featuring Congressman Henry Waxman and a host of other high-ranking U.S. health care officials.

The conference will address the important health questions of our time. There will be a particular emphasis on the 42 million Americans who are without health insurance, and the economic and non-economic barriers that present the major obstacles to health care access. The HPD's own Debbie Wasserman Schultz is serving as the conference planning chair.

Four concurrent sessions will cover:

- Bioterrorism and Access
- Pharmaceuticals and Access
- Senior Care and the Aging of the Population
- Technology and Access.

We are proud to say our calendar is continually filled with activities that we think will impact not only our faculty and student body, but the community at large.

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All articles are written by Scott Colton, Director of Education Communications, unless otherwise indicated.

FEATURES

Gulick's Initiative Benefits Internal Medicine Students - 11

From the day he arrived at NSU-COM in 1999 to launch his medical career, M-3 student Gregory Gulick was convinced his destiny lay in the practice of internal medicine. But when he realized no existing student organization existed on campus for budding internists, Gulick sprang into action, utilizing his coordination skills to establish the Student Osteopathic Internal Medicine Association (SOIMA).

A Heart-to-Heart Interview with Dr. A. Alvin Greber - 16

When it comes to choosing a career, some people spend much of their lives wandering aimlessly through the job landscape, showcasing little passion for what they do as they collect their weekly paychecks. But there are other individuals, like cardiology specialist Dr. A. Alvin Greber, who knew from an early age where their destiny lay.

The Future is Now for OSCE at NSU-COM - 19

On August 16, 2002, a pioneering group of 20 fourth-year students will usher in a new paradigm of osteopathic medical education when they return to NSU-COM to participate in a pilot Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) that will meticulously assess their ability to perform precise and compassionate patient examinations.

Team Effort Ensures Success at Glades Health Fair - 21

Thanks to the efforts of over 100 NSU Health Professions Division students and faculty members, approximately 500 people from the Florida communities of Belle Glade, Pahokee, South Bay, and Clewiston were afforded access to medical care and health education at the inaugural Glades REACH Health Fair.

Medical Missions to Guatemala Broaden Scope - 23

In January, the College of Osteopathic Medicine made its fourth visit to various impoverished and medically underserved villages in Guatemala as a contingent of 57 volunteers comprising 28 medical students, 21 licensed health care providers, and 8 community volunteers provided medical care to a record 928 patients.

Student Extraordinaire: Hannan Alsahlani - 25

How did a woman who once described herself as the least likely to succeed transform herself into a stellar student and entrepreneur-in-the-making who is both beloved and revered by her peers for concocting entertaining and innovative exam review sessions? Find out in this enlightening interview with 2002 Student D.O. of the Year Hannan Alsahlani.

Muslim Students Reflect on Post-attack Attitudes - 28

The past seven months have been extremely difficult ones for the nation as its collective citizenry continues to deal with feelings ranging from shock and sadness to anger and fear following the events that transpired last September 11. In this thought-provoking article, three Muslim students address the changes that have occurred in their lives and share their hopes for peace in a world currently defined by discord.

DEPARTMENTS

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News Briefs



Rita Silverman, M.P.S.

field and comprises women-owned businesses, national and local companies, non-profit organizations, and trade associations as well as legal and academic entities.

According to a recent report in *The Washington Monthly*, Nova Southeastern University ranks No. 3 nationally for the percentage of federal work-study funds used for community service by private four-year schools with at least \$250,000 in federal aid. Approximately 40 percent of NSU students work in community service to fulfill their financial aid requirement—one of the highest rates in the country.

Columbia Hospital in West Palm Beach, which is a component of NSU-COM's Consortium for Excellence in Medical Education (CEME), was featured in a *Palm Beach Post* article that highlighted the institution's status as the county's only teaching hospital and its affiliation with NSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine. The 250-bed facility currently has eight residents, six interns, and 14 medical students working at or rotating through its various departments.



Joanna Greenblatt and Meena Nahata

Populations in Jamaica" at two recent symposiums: the Eastern Atlantic Student Research Conference and the Sixth Annual American Medical Student Association (AMSA) Poster Session. The inclusion of Greenblatt's and Nahata's abstract in the AMSA event was a first not only

In January, Rita Silverman, M.P.S., director of clinical research, was elected president of the Broward County Chapter of the Women's Healthcare Executive Network (WHEN). The network's membership represents organizations that exemplify the complexity of the health care

for NSU-COM but also for the osteopathic medical profession.

Bill Kirsh, D.O., a 1985 NSU-COM alumnus, and his company eAppealSolutions were featured in the February 4 issue of *The Herald*, the Broward edition of *The Miami Herald*. The article focused on the success of Dr. Kirsh's Miami-Beach-based company that has developed technology which allows health care organizations to file online claims for a fraction of the cost and time needed to send them by snail mail. The year-old company converts a health care provider's claim into an electronic format and then sends it to the corresponding insurer via the Web.

The osteopathic profession will mark a milestone in August 2003 when the \$20 million Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine opens its doors to its first class of 150 students, making it the 20th osteopathic college in the United States. The Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine will be housed on a 10-acre plot of land at the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center.

Dean Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O., Pharm.D., was a featured speaker at the Pinellas County Osteopathic Medical Society meeting, where he presented an insightful overview of the recent accomplishments and milestones achieved at NSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine.



Dr. Silvagni addresses attendees at the Pinellas County Osteopathic Medical Society meeting.

Gustavo A. Saldias, M.P.H., has been appointed special projects administrator of the NSU-COM Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program. He had previously served in AHEC as administrator of the Florida Border Health Education and Training Center (HETC)



Gustavo A. Saldias, M.P.H.

News Briefs continued on page 6

Program from 1994 to 1998 and then as assistant professor of public health until 2001. In his new role, Saldias will work closely with NSU-COM faculty and the community in the development and implementation of several new AHEC training initiatives. Saldias earned his M.P.H. degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is currently pursuing a doctorate in public health from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in the United Kingdom.

In February, Shawn Martin, director of congressional affairs for the American Osteopathic Association, addressed the M-1 and M-2 students on the topic "The Legislative Process and How it Impacts You." The event was cosponsored by the college's student chapters of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOF) and the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association (FOMA). Mr. Martin is the son of Sherri and Ronnie Martin, D.O., who are members of the NSU-COM staff and faculty. Dr. Martin serves as chair of the Department of Family Medicine, while Sherri acts as coordinator of grants and special projects.



Elizabeth Nowacki, FOMA student district society president; Sherri, Ronnie, and Shawn Martin; and Katarina Lindley, NSU-COM student chapter ACOFP president.

On February 9, Michael M. Patterson, Ph.D., professor and assistant chair of Osteopathic Principles and Practice, served as "Chair of the Day" and presented the opening speech at the International Research Conference organized by the Osteopathic Center for Children in San Diego, California. The conference, which also celebrated the 20th anniversary of the renowned center, drew attendees and speakers from around the world, including France, Russia, Portugal, Spain, and Canada. Dr. Patterson had the honor of presenting Viola Fryman, D.O., the center's founder, with a plaque from the San Diego City Council proclaiming Saturday, February 9 as Osteopathic Center for Children Day in San Diego.

For the second consecutive year, NSU has been recognized as one of the finest universities in the nation

in the publication *Great Colleges for the Real World* (2002-2003). The book, formerly known as *The Best 201 Colleges for the Real World*, evaluates the undergraduate colleges or universities on 17 criteria, which include:

- Share of Majors in Applied Fields
- Population of the Surrounding Cities
- Admission Selectivity
- Institutional Commitment to Job Placement Services
- Freshman Graduating in Four Years or Less
- Unique Program Offerings for "Non-traditional" Students
- Diversity of Student Population



Jessie Legros, M.P.H.

Jessie Legros, M.P.H., statewide HETC administrator, has been selected to serve on the leadership team for Florida's National Health Care Standard Project. This is a 30-month project that works with developing public health policy response on domestic violence and is sponsored by the Family Violence Prevention Fund and the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

In April, M-2 student Joe Whiteley was invited to present his abstract on "Identification and Characterization of Genomic Instability in Sporadic Colorectal Cancer" at the 43rd annual meeting of the National Student Research Forum, held at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. Whiteley conducted his research at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York.



Joe Whiteley

Each year, the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association (FOMA) presents scholarship awards to two worthy NSU-COM students who are FOMA members during the organization's annual meeting, which was held February 21-24 at the



Brian Lee Browning with Dr. Silvagni and Katharyn Madiwale.

Hyatt Regency Pier 66 in Fort Lauderdale. Brian Lee Browning was the recipient of the Junior Award, which goes to the NSU-COM third-year student who possesses the highest grade-point average. Browning received \$300 and a commemorative plaque in honor of his achievements. Katharyn Madiwale was the winner of the Senior Award, which is presented to the NSU-COM fourth-year student who demonstrates both overall excellence in academics and an ongoing commitment to the practice of osteopathic medicine in Florida. Madiwale received \$500 and a commemorative plaque in honor of her accomplishments.

The Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents (COSGP) Executive Board has appointed M-3 student James Treadwell to chair the Council on Postdoctoral Training Subcommittee on OPTI Evaluation.

In March, M-2 student Hannan Alsahlani, who has earned widespread popularity for creating imaginative tutorial sessions and humorous exam review packets, was voted 2002 Student D.O. of the Year by her grateful NSU-COM classmates.



Hannan Alsahlani

NSU-COM Nabs Nine Stuey Award Nominations

The College of Osteopathic Medicine walked away with a hefty nine nominations when balloting was completed for the Third Annual NSU Student Life Achievement Awards. The winners were announced Tuesday, April 16 in the Rose and Alfred Miniaci Performing Arts Center located in the university's new Library, Research, and Information Technology Center.

The awards, also known as the "Stueys," serve as a celebration of NSU's best in leadership, scholarship, service, integrity, commitment, involvement, and responsibility. A full wrap-up of the Stuey Awards will appear in the summer issue of *COM Outlook*.

Following are the NSU-COM affiliated individuals and organizations that received well-deserved Stuey nominations:

Academic Dean of the Year
Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O., Pharm.D.

Graduate Organization of the Year
Sigma Sigma Phi

Administrator of the Year
Morton Terry, D.O.

Professor of the Year
Elaine Wallace, D.O.

Alumni of the Year
Tamer Gozleveli, D.O.

Staff Person of the Year
Johneta Goodwin

Co-Curricular Advisor of the Year
Charlotte Paolini, D.O.

Student of the Year
Joanna Greenblatt

Corporate Partner of the Year
North Broward Hospital District

NSU Named 12th Largest Independent University

Nova Southeastern University has been identified as the 12th largest independent, not-for-profit, post-secondary institution in the United States based on enrollment of 18,587 students for the fall 2000 term. The data, which is collected by the Integrated Post Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS), includes all U.S. regions.

In 1999, NSU was listed as the 14th largest behind Stanford University, but has now leapfrogged over Stanford to follow 11th place Saint John's University. The ten largest not-for-profit institutions are:

- New York University - 37,150
- Brigham Young University - 32,554

- University of Southern California - 29,194
- Boston University - 28,318
- Harvard University - 24,279
- Northeastern University - 23,897
- University of Pennsylvania - 21,853
- DePaul University - 20,548
- George Washington University - 20,527
- Columbia University - 19,639

NSU, the largest independent university in the southeastern United States, has a fall 2001 enrollment of 19,067 and has produced approximately 73,000 alumni since its establishment in 1964.

HPD Faculty Collaborate at Optometry Symposium



Joseph Pizzimenti, O.D., and Stanley Zimmerman, D.O.

Because of the vast resources available through the six colleges that comprise NSU's Health Professions Division, the trend has been to encourage HPD faculty to collaborate with their peers whenever

possible. An example of this interdisciplinary alliance occurred last December when faculty members from NSU-COM and the College of Optometry delivered a joint lecture at the American Academy of Optometry (AAO) Ellerbrock Memorial Continuing Education Program in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

During the AAO symposium, Stanley Zimmerman, D.O., assistant professor and chair of the Division of Radiology, and Joseph Pizzimenti, O.D., assistant professor in the College of Optometry, discussed radiology and its role in the diagnosis of neuro-eye and other oculo-systemic diseases. After Dr. Zimmerman outlined the principles of radiology, he and Dr. Pizzimenti described a number of patient cases from the Sanford L. Ziff Health Care Center in which NSU radiology and optometry faculty, residents, and students collaborated in the care of these patients.

The AAO Ellerbrock Memorial Continuing Education Program is the preeminent international academic optometry conference concerning cutting-edge eye and vision scientific research.

AHEC Hosts Visit from HRSA Health Chief

In February, the NSU-COM Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program hosted a field visit from Sam Shekar, M.D., M.P.H., associate administrator for health professions of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration. Dr. Shekar was escorted to Belle Glade on a daylong site visit of the Glades Health Education and Training Center (HETC) by AHEC Program Director Steven Zucker, D.M.D., M.Ed., and several other AHEC and HETC team members.

The Glades HETC is one of several federally-funded HETC's that have been established by AHEC throughout Florida to respond to the significant challenges being faced by health

providers in meeting the health care needs of the state's growing immigrant and minority population. A highlight of Dr. Shekar's visit was a tour of the C.L. Brumback Health Center, where he met with Chief Executive Officer Robert Trenchel, D.O., M.P.H., and other local clinicians and administrators to discuss how the HETC Program is contributing to health services in the Glades area.

Dr. Shekar also met with NSU-COM students who are conducting their rural clinical rotation at the center. During his visit to South Florida, Dr. Shekar was accompanied by Mr. Jeffrey Dunlap, acting director for the bureau's Division of Public Health.

OMT Assists in Gold Medal Performance

Further proof of the benefits of osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT) was evidenced during this year's Winter Olympics when speed skater Apolo Anton Ohno received OMT prior to the 1,500-meter Short Track race in which he won the gold medal. After Ohno suffered a gash on his leg requiring stitches during a collision in a previous race, Lawrence Lavine, D.O.—Ohno's personal physician from Tacoma, Washington—flew to Salt Lake City to assist U.S. team physicians in treating him.

Dr. Lavine, who is board certified in osteopathic manipulative medicine, used advanced forms of OMT to treat Ohno. "Basically, I used osteopathic manipulative medicine to release the injury pattern," Dr. Lavine explained. "By relieving structure and tissue restrictions, you allow the body to begin healing itself more rapidly. When I treated Apolo, it was not a matter of dealing with just the leg; it was a matter of going through his entire body and cleaning out every bit of strain pattern. The whole purpose of what we do is to restore the health, remove the strain, and let the body heal itself."

A study published in the November 4, 1999, issue of the New England Journal of Medicine showed OMT to be an effective form of medical treatment. Patients who participated in the study and received OMT required significantly less medication and used less therapy, resulting in lower costs and fewer side effects.

Diabetes Seminar Utilizes Interdisciplinary Approach

On March 16, the Health Professions Division staged its inaugural interdisciplinary continuing medical education program entitled "Diabetes: A Comprehensive Update for the Primary Health Care Provider." The uniqueness of the program, which included faculty participation from the colleges of osteopathic medicine, dental medicine, optometry, and pharmacy, provided attendees with a wealth of information on the pervasive disease that currently afflicts approximately 16 million Americans.

"Very few, if any, diabetes CME programs throughout the country use a faculty that includes physicians—both allopathic and osteopathic—dentists, optometrists, pharmacists, podiatrists, physician assistants, and dieticians," said Joseph Pizzimenti, O.D., an assistant professor in the College of Optometry who chaired the symposium's planning subcommittee. "This is the first program of its kind to offer CME credit to each of these provider groups. A unique opportunity exists here at NSU-HPD to bring these professionals together in an environment that fosters an exchange of ideas and presentation of new knowledge using a systems approach to management."

The decision to coordinate an interdisciplinary diabetes program was based on the disease's proclivity to affect all areas of the human body. "Diabetes was an obvious first choice because it really is a multi-system condition," Dr. Pizzimenti explained. "It is a chronic, complex, and destructive disease that can cause a wide range of problems, including heart disease, kidney failure, amputations, and blindness. That's why an interdisciplinary, team approach to management is essential."

The symposium's major goal was to provide an interdisciplinary educational program that offered practical knowledge about diabetes to primary health care providers from many disciplines and outlined the latest advances in diabetes research and their potential impact on clinical practice.

Listed below are the topics NSU-COM faculty discussed during the diabetes symposium:

Impact of Diabetes: The Burden of Disease

James Howell, M.D., M.P.H.

Professor and Chair, Department of Rural Medicine

Current Concepts in Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus General Manifestations of Diabetes

Alan Morrison, D.O.

Assistant Professor, Department of Internal Medicine

The Importance of Recognizing Type 2 in Adolescents

Edward Packer, D.O.

Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Pediatrics

Clinical Guidelines for Patient Management: A Global Approach to Care

Joseph DeGaetano, D.O.

Assistant Professor and Director, Clinical Curriculum and Graduate Medical Education

Nelson Onaro, D.O., Outreaches to Homeland

Although it's been nearly 30 years since Nelson C. Onaro, D.O., left Nigeria to pursue a medical career in the United States, the 1992 NSU-COM alumnus has always maintained a warm place in his heart for his homeland.

That affection was rekindled when he returned to Nigeria some 20 years later to attend his uncle's funeral. During the church services, Dr. Onaro was struck by the generosity of the parishioners, who had pooled their limited financial resources to purchase and dispense vitamins to needy youngsters and seniors. "I was very touched by their generosity, and I started asking questions about what I could do to help," said Dr. Onaro, who serves as a staff physician at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McCallister, Oklahoma.

Over the next three weeks, Dr. Onaro put his osteopathic skills to good use by treating as many villagers as possible with manipulation techniques to ease distress caused by diabetes, respiratory ailments, hip dysfunction, and other health disorders. When warranted, he would even dig deep into his pockets and purchase whatever medications were available to treat a suffering patient.

When he returned to the United States, Dr. Onaro made a promise to himself and the people of Nigeria that he would make an annual medical pilgrimage to the region and help those who had no control over their perpetually beleaguered existences. "Since my uncle's death, I have returned to Nigeria five times and am currently looking to set up a program or clinic for those afflicted with blindness and leprosy," said Dr. Onaro, who personally visits patients' home in a Nigerian village called Agbor.

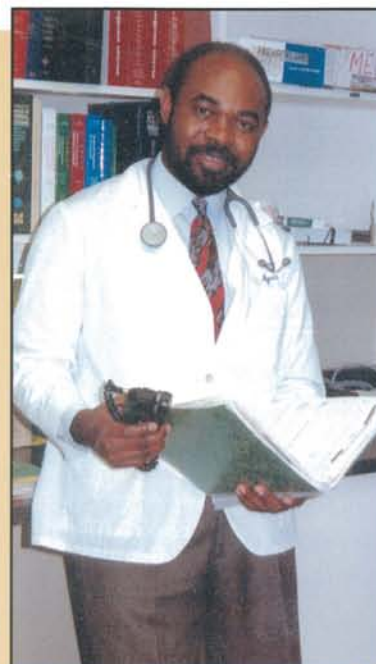
Making a difference in people's lives was something Dr. Onaro knew he wanted to do, but the seeds of his altruism may have been planted after he had a poignant and indelible childhood exchange with his father as they walked down a Nigerian street. "When I saw these poor people, blind and hungry, walking past us with mucus dripping down their faces, I turned to my dad and asked, 'Does that mean that God doesn't love these people?' My dad lovingly reached over, drew my head close to his heart, and said, 'God does love them, but don't forget, we should also be our brother's keepers.' That message always stuck with me. The reason I went to medical school was because I wanted to help those less fortunate than myself. And I only pray that I am able to do that."



Dr. Onaro treats a Nigerian villager who was experiencing pain following a radial-bone fracture.



A retired Nigerian elementary school principal who was suffering from intermittent chest pain receives a thorough examination from the visiting U.S. physician.



Nelson C. Onaro, D.O.

Gulick's Initiative Benefits Internal Medicine Students



Gregory Gulick

From the day he arrived at NSU-COM in 1999 to launch his medical career, M-3 student Gregory Gulick was convinced his destiny lay in the practice of internal medicine. But when he realized no existing student organization existed on campus for budding internists, Gulick sprang into action, utilizing his coordination skills to establish the Student Osteopathic Internal Medicine Association (SOIMA).

"At the beginning of my second year, I realized there was no student organization for aspiring internists. So, I contacted the American College of Osteopathic Internists (ACOI) and asked if they would be interested in supporting a student chapter at NSU-COM," Gulick explained. "They were very excited about the idea. So, in 2000 I founded SOIMA—the NSU-COM student chapter of the ACOI—and served as its first president. SOIMA very quickly became an active and popular organization, with over 80 members within three months of its founding."

Like most student organizations, SOIMA's primary mission is to provide additional education to those interested in a specific medical discipline, such as internal medicine. Guest speakers from various medical specialties are invited to address topics of interest to students, as are internal medicine residency directors, who share information about their individual programs.

When his term as SOIMA officer concluded, Gulick decided to test the waters and see if the ACOI would consider forming a national student chapter that would represent all student chapters at the various colleges of osteopathic medicine. "I explained to the ACOI that there was a real need for a national student internal medicine chapter because internal medicine represents

the "other" primary care field and is the second-most popular residency among osteopathic graduates," Gulick said. "I also explained that there was a national meeting called the National Osteopathic Student Caucus, which is composed of representatives of various other student chapters (e.g., SOMA, family medicine, surgery, etc.), but there was no internal medicine representation on this committee.

The aforementioned committee reviews all of the proposed AOA policy changes at the AOA House of Delegates meeting and forms a unified student consensus on each measure. The information is then presented to the AOA so the organization knows exactly how students feel about policy changes.

"The ACOI was very enthusiastic about my proposal for a national student chapter and offered its support by appointing me as the first president of the national student chapter," he added. "So I began the groundwork to create a national SOIMA chapter in 2001. I'm proud to say that at the 2001

AOA House of Delegates meeting there was, for the first time, internal medicine representation on the National Osteopathic Student Caucus. This was a big step forward for all future osteopathic internists."

In October 2001, when the ACOI held its yearly convention in Orlando, national SOIMA chapter members met with ACOI leaders and held elections for the first time, selecting yet another NSU-COM student, M-2 Joshua Miller, as president. Thanks to Gulick and those who have followed in his footsteps, a forum now exists for future generations of osteopathic internists to voice their concerns and express their opinions.



Miller and Gulick strike a presidential pose at the ACOI convention in Orlando.



Joshua Miller

Alumni Interact at FOMA Reception

During the 99th Annual Florida Osteopathic Medical Association (FOMA) Convention, held February 21-24 at the Hyatt Regency Pier 66 in Fort Lauderdale, NSU-COM coordinated an alumni reception which drew a diverse mix of graduates, family members, faculty, and nationwide osteopathic leaders. Pictured below is a gallery of photos from the FOMA alumni reception.





NSU President Ray Ferrero, Jr., J.D., receives his autographed copy from Drs. Fox and Ahmed.



Daniel Shaw, Ph.D.

In December, **Sultan Ahmed, M.D.**, assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine, celebrated the publication of his *Physician Assistant Clinical Review Cards* with a book-signing session in the Terry Building. Dr. Ahmed co-authored the tome with Carmen Fox, M.P.H., an assistant professor of community medicine who works in the College of Allied Health. In March, Dr. Ahmed was invited to the Universite Lumiere/MEBSH in Haiti to discuss his humanitarian medical mission work at the institution's commencement ceremony. He also received an honorary degree for his efforts to enhance health care for Haiti's indigent population.

Daniel Shaw, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Family Medicine, was named administrative co-director of Clinical Practicum I and II, Clinical Procedures I and II, and the Clinical Practicum III and IV courses for the winter 2002 semester.

Kenneth Johnson, D.O., assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology, was quoted in a recent Associated Press story concerning the trend of couples pursuing pregnancy in the wake of last September's terrorist attacks.



Kenneth Johnson, D.O.



Michael M. Patterson, Ph.D.

In January, **Michael M. Patterson, Ph.D.**, professor and assistant chair of the Department of Osteopathic Principles and Practice, was invited to serve as a member of the External Board of Scientific Counselors (EBSC), which is a component of the newly formed Osteopathic Research Center (ORC) at the University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth. The EBSC will provide guidance to the ORC's executive director in an effort to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and longevity of the ORC. In February, Dr. Patterson traveled to Frauchimsee, Germany, to attend the Sixth International Symposium of Traditional Osteopathy and the associated Research Day. The conference was organized by the German Osteopathic College and was attended by osteopaths from a number of European countries, including Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France, Norway, and Russia.

Elisa Ginter, D.O., assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine, was recently selected to serve as a member of the leadership team for Florida's National Health Care Standards Project. The leadership team will focus on public health policy response on domestic violence and is a component of the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence.



Elisa Ginter, D.O.



Gary Hill, D.O.

In January, **Gary Hill, D.O.**, became a welcome addition to the Department of Internal Medicine faculty. Dr. Hill, who received his D.O. degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1985, spent the past 12 years as a practicing physician in Gadsden, Alabama and also served as chief medical officer at Quality of Life Health Services, Inc. He recently completed his board certification in internal medicine.



Lourtiz (Larry) A. Jensen,
D.A.



Leonard Levy, D.P.M., M.P.H.



Alina Perez, J.D., L.C.S.W.



Elaine Wallace, D.O.



Joseph DeGaetano, D.O.

In March, Lourtiz (Larry) A. Jensen, D.A., joined the NSU-COM team in the newly created position of director of pre-clinical education. His broad-based responsibilities include overseeing, planning, and implementing the college's basic sciences and pre-clinical curriculum as well as analyzing course and instructor evaluations to ensure the delivery of quality academic and clinical training programs. Dr. Jensen, who is a respected microbiologist, received his training at Brigham Young University, California State University, and the University of Northern Colorado. Prior to joining the NSU-COM staff, Dr. Jensen served as chair of the Department of Microbiology at the University of Health Sciences College of Osteopathic Medicine in Kansas City, Missouri, a position he held for 20 years. A major proponent of international medicine, he recently completed a term as president of DOCARE International, a medical outreach organization that brings needed health care to primitive and isolated people in remote areas of Western Hemisphere countries.

Leonard Levy, D.P.M., M.P.H., professor and associate dean of the Department of Education, Planning, and Research, was profiled in the January-February issue of *The California Podiatric Physician*, which is published by the California Podiatric Medical Association. The article praised Dr. Levy for being an individual "who has devoted his career to the education of others and contributed significantly to the development of the profession of podiatric medicine." Dr. Levy also was featured in the February issue of *Podiatry Management* as part of a panel-style article entitled "Round Table: The Aging Population."

Alina Perez, J.D., L.C.S.W., who joined NSU-COM's Master of Public Health faculty last November, recently was appointed to the Ethics Committee at Broward General Medical Center and the Bioethics Committee at Florida Medical Center. In February, Dr. Perez also presented a CME seminar on "Therapeutic Death" for the staff physicians at Broward General Medical Center.

In February, Elaine Wallace, D.O., professor and chair of the Department of Osteopathic Principles and Practice, was a featured speaker at the Mississippi Osteopathic Association's winter CME program. She also chaired the National Boards' Osteopathic Principles and Practice Committee meeting, which determines the content of parts I, II, and III of the OPP board exams.

The D.O. duo of Joseph and Hilda DeGaetano published an article on "Pruritic Urticarial Papules and Plaques of Pregnancy: An Unusual Case" in the January issue of *The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association (JAOA)*. Dr. Hilda DeGaetano serves as a clinical assistant professor of pediatrics, while Dr. Joseph DeGaetano acts as assistant professor of family medicine and director of clinical curriculum and graduate medical education.

Edward Packer, D.O., associate professor and chair of the Department of Pediatrics, recently passed his American Osteopathic Board of Pediatrics Certifying Exam, earning the highest score among those taking the test. Dr. Packer is also board certified in pediatrics by the allopathic branch—the



Edward Packer, D.O.

American Board of Pediatrics. He and his wife Janie also played a significant volunteer role at NSU's Love Jen Family Festival in February, serving as volunteers for the event which raises money for South Florida children afflicted with cancer. Working with students from NSU-COM's Pediatrics Club, Dr. Packer helped coordinate free pediatric exams, which included dental and eye screenings.

The past few months have been busy ones for Jennie Q. Lou, M.D., M.Sc., who serves as associate professor of public health. In addition to publishing a book entitled *Challenges and Opportunities for Health Professionals: Foundation in Medical Genetics*, Dr. Lou has been invited to serve as a content specialist for a new National Institutes of Health (NIH) ELSI R25 grant titled Genetics Education for Healthcare Professionals. She also received two awards from NSU College of Allied Health occupational therapy students: the Most Influential to the Profession of Occupational Therapy Award from the master's students and the Mentoring Excellence Award from the doctoral students.



Jennie Q. Lou, M.D., M.Sc.

Alan Morrison, D.O., assistant professor in the Department of Internal Medicine, was recently elected a fellow of the American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine (ACP-ASIM). This designation is considered a benchmark in the career of an internist because fellowship is achieved by those recognized by their peers for personal integrity, superior competence in internal medicine, professional accomplishment, and demonstrated scholarship. Dr. Morrison also was appointed by the ACP-ASIM's governor to serve as the Florida chapter's regional representative.



Alan Morrison, D.O.

On February 23, Jean M. Malecki, M.D., M.P.H., clinical associate professor and chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine, received the President's Award from the American College of Preventive Medicine during its annual awards banquet held in San Antonio, Texas.

In February, James Howell, M.D., M.P.H., professor and chair of the Department of Rural Medicine, was appointed to the board of directors of the Hanley-Hazelden Center at Saint Mary's in West Palm Beach, Florida. The nonprofit center specializes in programs that help individuals and their families understand and overcome chemical dependency problems.



Jean M. Malecki, M.D., M.P.H.

Rosebud Foster, Ed.D., special assistant to the AHEC/HETC program director and special assistant to the HPD executive vice chancellor and provost, was appointed chair of the Florida Department of Health's Statewide Advisory Committee that oversees the Closing the Gap Program. In this role, Dr. Foster has been conducting regional community forums on local solutions towards reduction of health disparities in racial and ethnic minority populations.



James Howell, M.D., M.P.H.



Rosebud Foster, Ed.D.

Faculty

FOCUS

"King of Cardiology"

A Heart-to-Heart Interview with A. Alvin Greber, D.O.

By Scott Colton
Director of Education Communications

When it comes to choosing a career, some people spend much of their lives wandering aimlessly through the job landscape, showcasing little passion for what they do as they collect their weekly paychecks. But there are other individuals who knew from an early age where their career destiny lay, and they steadfastly and resolutely transformed their dreams from fantasy to fruition.

That was certainly the case for A. Alvin Greber, D.O., who serves as professor and chair of NSU-COM's Department of Internal Medicine and Division of Cardiovascular Medicine. "Ever since I was a kid, as far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a physician," said Dr. Greber, who was born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. "When I went to summer camp at the age of eight, I recall the very first thing I wanted to do was be in the doctor's office and help him do things like hand out the Band-Aids in the camp office."

As he reached his adolescent years, Dr. Greber's fascination with the medical field was further nurtured by his family doctor, Arnold Berger, who just happened to be an osteopathic physician—a fact he kept well hidden. "I never knew what an osteopathic physician was," Dr. Greber explained. "I knew nothing about osteopathy at that time, only the fact that I respected my family doctor, who was legendary in south Philadelphia. He saw over 100 patients every day, and when the front of his office was mobbed they'd come through the back door because he had another side entrance for his regular patients. They'd be waiting on the curb to get in."

Unfortunately, because osteopathic medicine was disdained by much of the medical profession back in the 1950's, most D.O.'s did not actively advertise their osteopathic status. "Because of the prejudice, Dr. Berger did not even put the D.O. designation on the sign outside his office," he said. "As a result, I don't believe even five percent of his patients

knew what an osteopathic physician was, including myself when I used to assist him in his office from time to time."



"Ever since I was a kid, as far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a physician."

After graduating from high school, Dr. Greber attended the University of Pennsylvania, where he majored in microbiology and showcased his all-court skills by playing varsity basketball. A career in medicine was the ultimate goal, yet Dr. Greber felt unsure of the exact direction he wanted to take. That's when his father interceded, providing the budding physician with some prudent advice. "My dad said, 'Why don't you talk to Dr. Berger? You've had a nice relationship with him and worked in his office. He knows you want to be a doctor, and he will recommend you to attend his alma mater.' That's when I found out he was an osteopathic physician, so I figured if it was good enough for Dr. Berger, it was good enough for me." Dr. Greber recalled.

Thanks to a glowing letter of recommendation from Dr. Berger, Dr. Greber was accepted to Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM) and began his distinguished journey toward an enriching career in the osteopathic realm. After earning his D.O. degree in 1958, Dr. Greber completed his internship and residency at Osteopathic Medical Center in Philadelphia. In 1965, he earned his certification in internal medicine, which was followed in 1978 with certification in cardiology.

Although he was initially unsure about where to relocate to when he completed his residency, fate again intervened in the form of Herman Kohn, D.O., a prominent professor and surgeon at PCOM who had befriended Dr. Greber. "Dr. Kohn came to me and said he had a spot for me at a new hospital called Parkview, which is now known as Metropolitan Hospital and owned by PCOM," he explained. "He basically said, 'You are going to practice with us,' and that's how I subsequently wound up becoming the chair of internal medicine and then cardiology at the hospital."

Over the next 25 years, Dr. Greber—much like his childhood mentor Dr. Berger—established himself as a respected osteopathic practitioner in the Philadelphia area, serving in a variety of positions at the Parkview division of Metropolitan Hospital, including:

- Chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine
- Chief of the Division of Cardiology
- Director of Residency Training in Internal Medicine
- Director of the Coronary Care Unit
- Director of the Medical Department of Emergency Room and Occupational Health Patients Registered in the CompCare Industrial Program

Early in his tenure at Parkview, Dr. Greber was confronted with a particularly troubling case, which involved a cardiac patient who was near death following a traumatic accident. Realizing he had nothing to lose and everything to gain, Dr. Greber contacted Michael DeBakey, M.D., who was a pioneer in cardiac surgery at Methodist Hospital in Houston, Texas. Dr. DeBakey immediately responded by sending his heart retrieval team to Parkview to transport the patient back to Houston for what would be the second heart transplant procedure of his career.

Impressed with Dr. Greber's medical aptitude, Dr. DeBakey invited him to spend 10 days at Houston's Methodist Hospital to observe firsthand the cutting-edge procedures that were taking place at the medical center. "It was quite an experience, observing the organization and application of high technology to new and uncharted medical pathways," he recalled. "Dr. DeBakey's office was always filled with the most prominent cardiac patients from all over the world, including sheiks, prime ministers, and heads of state."

While professional success abounded, his first marriage floundered—a casualty of that all-too-familiar mistress called medicine. "She did not like being a doctor's wife," admitted Dr. Greber, who took the marital plunge a second time in 1984 with Mary Calias, Psy.D., who has her own psychology practice in Hollywood, Florida. "During the divorce hearings she said to the judge, 'I think I'm third in his life. He's married to medicine first, the children second—and I think I run a distant third.'"



**Dr. Greber,
1950's style.**

Although that 10-year union produced three wonderful children—Steven and Kevin, who are attorneys, and daughter Farin, who produces television commercials, Dr. Greber

doesn't deny that medicine was indeed the focal point of his life back then. "I have to say that during my early years I was married to medicine," he said. "I used to work upwards of 16 hours a day, and my ex-wife simply couldn't believe I would leave a family function just because I had a hospital admission."

His second attempt at marital bliss has proven much more successful, thanks to the combination of his own maturation as a human being and the love and understanding of his life partner, Mary. "She has been the support a physician committed to medicine requires—with the encouragement and counsel a true partner in life is ready to supply," he said. "As the cliché goes, I could not have done it without her."

As the 1980's drew to a close, Dr. Greber was happily ensconced in his new position as medical director of ACCORD Health Services in Wayne, Pennsylvania, when an old friend who had relocated to South Florida called with an intriguing offer. "Dr. Arnold Melnick, who I had known for many years, had come down to South Florida to help Chancellor Morton Terry establish Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine (SECOM)," Dr. Greber said. "And he asked me to come down and teach a cardiology course."

More specifically, Dr. Melnick, who was the founding dean of SECOM, wanted Dr. Greber to teach a course on "Harvey," the cardiology patient simulator that allows NSU-COM students to gain invaluable knowledge as they learn to discern the differences between and meanings of various heart sounds. "Initially, I was just supposed to come down and teach a two-week Harvey course and then return to Pennsylvania. But as the cliché goes, they made me an offer I couldn't refuse, and I agreed to stay on for a year as the college's chief of cardiology and chair of internal medicine."

That "one year" has since stretched to 13 and counting. But when he first accepted the position, the department he inherited was vastly different from the one he has helped evolve into one of the most nationally acclaimed internal medicine units in both the allopathic and osteopathic professions. Unlike today's multifaceted and well-rounded internal medicine department, Dr. Greber was a lonely party of one when he first arrived at the North Miami campus on February 15, 1989.

"I was the department those first few years," recalled Dr. Greber, who was determined to modernize the internal medicine sector and bring some cache to the college by recruiting renowned clinical faculty. To accomplish this weighty task, he enlisted the aid of several formal colleagues in Philadelphia to secure a list of notable South Florida endocrinologists.

Dr. Greber continued on page 18

Utilizing his guile and formidable powers of persuasion, Dr. Greber convinced all seven physicians on the list to join the college's clinical faculty, 50 percent of who still actively teach at NSU-COM. He also single-handedly created the curricula syllabi and implemented an innovative log system to track the students' attendance and performance as they conducted their third and fourth-year rotations.

Another major achievement came with the establishment of an internal medicine residency program at Miami's Westchester General Hospital in 1990, which has since been merged with Mount Sinai Medical Center and Miami Heart Institute. The program, which began with 3 residents, has since expanded to 18 and earned a reputation as one of the nation's finest internal medicine residencies. "At a time when residencies are hard to fill, we had 40 applicants for 5 spots this year," proclaimed Dr. Greber, who served as president of the Dade County Osteopathic Medical Association from 1997 through 2001. "Our residency is extremely desirable, and we have the cream of the crop nationally. In fact, one of our residents finished first in the national boards."

In addition to its acclaimed residency program, one component that truly distinguishes NSU-COM's internal medicine department from those at other osteopathic colleges is its updated Harvey patient simulator, which provides NSU-COM students with a significant advantage over peers from other medical schools who do not possess a Harvey unit. "Chancellor Terry said he doesn't know why every medical school worldwide doesn't have a Harvey to teach students clinical auscultation, and I agree" said Dr. Greber, who also has the rarefied distinction of serving as a clinical professor of medicine at the University of Miami School of Medicine. "This unit allows our students to listen to all the murmurs and other heart sounds they will hear in clinical practice."

Approximately 65 medical schools worldwide utilize Harvey technology, including 50 throughout the United States. However, until recently, only one other osteopathic college—the University of Health Sciences College of Osteopathic Medicine in Kansas City—owned a Harvey. The unit, which was named after Dr. W. Proctor Harvey, a leading cardiac educator, is able to integrate all bedside findings and realistically reproduce both common and rare cardiac diseases.

Findings simulated include blood pressure, bilateral jugular venous pulsations, carotid and peripheral arterial pulsations, precordial pulse abnormalities, and the auscultatory events of each disease state. "The quality of the abnormality heard in Harvey is exactly as it is in real life," explained Dr. Greber,

who was the first D.O. ever invited to speak at the University of Miami's Teaching Conference in Clinical Cardiology in 1995. "It's much more authentic than listening to a cassette or CD-ROM. If you shut your eyes and listened to an actual patient and then listened to Harvey, you couldn't tell which was Harvey and which was the patient."

The newly enhanced Harvey unit is fully digitized, which eliminates most outside interference, and moves more smoothly from disorder to disorder. Utilizing wireless communication, students can remain in their seats and listen to Harvey via the use of infrared stethophones. "You can make 90 percent of cardiac diagnoses at the bedside if you know the Harvey program, and our students exemplify that," Dr. Greber said. "We've had students who've made a correct diagnosis of a hole between the chambers of the heart in their very first rotation. In fact, I get at least one or two letters a month from physicians throughout the country where our students rotate who are amazed at our students' proficiency in auscultation."

The growth and success of the Department of Internal Medicine have allowed Dr. Greber to hire additional full-time faculty who have brought added esteem to the College of Osteopathic Medicine. They are:

- Myint Myint Aye, M.D. (professor and director of systems)
- Alan Morrison, D.O. (assistant professor)
- Joel Spalter, M.D. (assistant professor)
- Anjali Noble, D.O. (assistant professor)
- Gary Hill, D.O. (assistant professor)
- Stanley Zimmelman, D.O. (assistant professor and chair of radiology)

"The department has grown not only in number but in the fact that we have made inroads via our students into allopathic hospitals where years ago they didn't even know what an osteopathic physician was," Dr. Greber explained. "We have faculty and courses that are second to none. In fact, our faculty and instructional techniques are among the best you will find in any allopathic or osteopathic medical school in the country. As a result, our students can compete with anybody, anywhere in the medical field."



Full-time faculty comprising the Department of Internal Medicine are (standing from left): Dr. Morrison; Dr. Greber; Dr. Spalter; and Dr. Hill. Seated are Dr. Aye, Dr. Noble, and Dr. Zimmelman.

The Future is Now for OSCE at NSU-COM

The winds of change are sweeping through the osteopathic profession, and NSU-COM is once again perched at the forefront of the latest philosophical shift in medical education that aims to enhance the hands-on, clinical training skills of medical students.

On August 16, 2002, a pioneering group of 20 fourth-year students will usher in a new paradigm of osteopathic medical education when they return to NSU-COM to participate in a pilot Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) that will meticulously assess their ability to perform precise and compassionate patient examinations. Through the use of standardized patients, who have been trained by NSU-COM faculty members to carefully evaluate the clinical skill level of student physicians, future generations of medical practitioners will receive an education that places greater emphasis on improving the overall doctor-patient relationship.

"OSCE has come about because after looking back at the last generation of physicians, we realized we hadn't maintained an emphasis on clinical skills, mainly because we didn't evaluate clinical skills," said Ronnie Martin, D.O., professor and chair of the Department of Family Medicine. "To put it bluntly, we were graduating a bunch of doctors the patients didn't want because they had become dependent on technology and lost what made them doctors—the hands-on, clinical approach. Through OSCE, we can correct these deficits before our students graduate and teach them that there is more to the practice of medicine than just book knowledge."

Although the OSCE idea—which has been used successfully for years as part of the medical licensing process in Canada—was formulated decades ago in Scotland and has already been incorporated into the allopathic profession, the osteopathic realm has only recently begun to embrace its inherent merits. "As far as NSU-COM and the osteopathic profession, this is a fairly new concept," said Joseph DeGaetano, D.O., assistant professor of family medicine and director of clinical curriculum and graduate medical education. "It is considered amongst medical educator circles as the gold standard for assessing clinical skill development and thinking on your feet in the clinical setting for medical students. So as we attempt to grow our college to the next level, our administration has identified a need to implement OSCE into our curriculum, not just in the clinical years, but also in our first two years.

"In the clinical training years, what we envision is developing an OSCE that truly assesses our students' ability to do a history and physical exam," Dr. DeGaetano added. "That's what we are focusing on in our first OSCE offering in

August. Once the program is in place, by 2004, all fourth-year students will be required to take the OSCE after they have gained one year of clinical experience through their required rotations. Our game plan is to have a 10-station OSCE, so we're developing 10 patient cases. Our department chairmen have all been tasked to develop a case that is reflective of their area of specialty, and our Council of Chairs is in the process of reviewing the developed cases. We look at the cases for accuracy, for meeting the objectives we've stated, and for whether or not they are realistic in their expectations. Essentially, we're looking at each one of these cases and working through them to make sure we're putting out a good product. We've done two already, and we have a timeline in place where every month we review two cases so that by August we are ready to put on our pilot OSCE."



Charlotte Paolini, D.O. (second from right), who chairs the Division of Geriatrics, and Dr. Graham (right) discuss an upcoming case with two standardized patients.

The push to implement OSCE into the curriculum has been accelerated by the decision of the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners to add an OSCE component to the Comprehensive

Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX) that all students must take and pass prior to becoming active, practicing physicians. "One of the pragmatic reasons for us to get involved is we want to make sure our students are prepared for the exam and won't feel as if it was something they suddenly had thrust upon them," said Leonard Levy, D.P.M., M.P.H., associate dean for education, planning, and research and professor of family medicine. "It will not be given as part of COMLEX Level 1, 2 or 3 but as a separate examination in the fourth year."

The inclusion of OSCE into the curriculum continues NSU-COM's shift from a didactic form of teaching to a more interactive, clinically based format that assesses the students' ability to provide a form of health care that adheres to the original tenets of osteopathic medicine—the holistic, "whole-person" approach. "When you interact with patients, they want to deal with physicians, not scientists," Dr. Martin explained. "That's the old gripe about the uncaring doctor. I think students are going to have to think more about their interactive abilities and communication skills. That's what patients want."

In the past, all board certifying exams consisted of a multiple-choice format that did a stellar job of testing cognitive ability

OSCE continued on page 20

but overlooked an analysis of a student's clinical and interpersonal skills. OSCE addresses that deficiency by requiring students to "strut their stuff" in front of standardized patients and faculty members who have been trained to closely evaluate clinical skills. "During the pilot phase of our OSCE, we will grade and assess the students and ask them to give us feedback on what they felt, which is very important," Dr. DeGaetano explained. "And we're also going to ask our standardized patients to give us feedback about how it all went. What's unique about the OSCE is that the physician does not actually grade the student. It is a layperson who has been trained in the case that actually assesses the student. The standardized patients are the ones who assess the student based upon very specific historical and physical exam points that we have trained them in. They also assess the student on their interpersonal skills and how well the student interacted with them. It's a very dynamic assessment because it analyzes a range of skills."

Loretta Graham, Ph.D., the college's medical education specialist who is overseeing all facets of the OSCE program, says its inclusion into the curriculum will benefit students in a range of ways. "During their clinical rotations in the third and fourth year, our students are not independent and must ask attending physicians what they can or cannot do. In the OSCE, for the first time, a student can—in a safe environment—be the physician in charge and at the same time benefit from having experts as well as trained standardized patients evaluate their clinical skills and diagnostic reasoning. The College of Osteopathic Medicine faculty needs to know that students can still take a blood pressure by the time they get to the fourth year. During the first two years of medical school, students learn history taking and physical exam skills. Then they take clinical rotations and are often exposed to physicians who do things in a different manner from what they were taught.

"These experts can take shortcuts with the history because of the patterns they have stored through years of experience. Novices tend to model what they see, thus adopting these same shortcuts before they are ready," added Dr. Graham, who also serves as an assistant professor of internal medicine. "This can cause erosion of the skills they learned in the first two years. With OSCE, we will be able to assess these skills in the fourth year and if need be offer any necessary remediation before graduation. If some students don't do well, we will give them a videotape of their exam and have them write, case by case, the strengths and weaknesses of their performance. The students are excellent at self-evaluation. It is not uncommon to hear a student say as he reviews his tape, 'I can't believe I forgot that,' or 'I can't believe I didn't ask about that,' or 'I can't believe I was so abrupt with that patient.' Essentially, the exam measures the students' ability to do diagnostic reasoning on their feet."

The standardized patients and physician raters will also be

held to a high level of excellence and consistency to ensure that the OSCE is a truly balanced and reliable testing modality. "We're taking lay people and fully educating them in a disease process. Not to the extent that a doctor must be knowledgeable, but to the degree that a patient would present with symptoms," Dr. DeGaetano said. "The physician who wrote up the case will sit down with the standardized patient for six total hours and will go through the entire case, from soup to nuts. The training is very detailed because the patient must exhibit the same behavior and present the same real or mock symptoms for each student physician participating in the OSCE."



M-3 Student Kurt Morrison performs an examination on a standardized patient.

Inevitably, the true success of each OSCE rests in the hands of the individuals who are evaluating the students because, unlike the judging subjectivity that exists in figure skating competitions, scoring conformity is essential. "Inter-rater reliability is

of vital importance because all raters should come up with the same outcome," Dr. Levy stressed. "If there's a very broad spread of opinion, then there is something wrong with that OSCE. That's why they are designed with such a tight evaluation instrument and why so much attention is paid to the training of the standardized patient. As a result, the likelihood that there would be a problem with the inter-rater reliability would be reduced to a minimum."

According to Dr. DeGaetano, the OSCE concept will become a more pervasive presence in the medical field, impacting not only students but also physicians who have been practicing in their specialty disciplines for many years. "In addition to our students having to do this type of an exam to pass their national licensing boards, most specialty boards, be they family practice or cardiology, are looking to implement OSCE," he stated. "This is a form of testing that today's students will be exposed to ad nauseum from this day forward. In fact, it would not shock me if the day soon came when all doctors have to re-certify in an OSCE format. That's why we as a college need to implement OSCE to prepare our students and help them be successful in whatever medical field they choose to enter in the future."

**NSU employees and students
are welcome to participate
as a standardized patient in the OSCE program.
Successful candidates will be compensated
at a rate of \$20 per hour.
For additional information, please contact
Dr. Loretta Graham at (954) 262-1477.**

Team Effort Ensures Success at Glades Health Fair

Thanks to the efforts of over 100 NSU Health Professions Division students and faculty members, approximately 500 people from the Florida communities of Belle Glade, Pahokee, South Bay, and Clewiston were afforded access to medical care and health education at the inaugural Glades REACH Health Fair on February 16. The medical outreach effort, which took place on a rain-drenched Saturday at Glades Central High School in Belle Glade, drew tremendous local and regional support from about 90 community organizations and was sponsored by a range of organizations, including:

- NSU Health Professions Division
- NSU-COM Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program
- NSU-COM Health Education and Training Center (HETC) Program
- NSU-COM American Medical Student Association (AMSA)
- Planned Approach to Community Health (PATCH)
- Agouron Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (a division of Pfizer)

"The REACH Fair planning team did an exceptional job in preparing students and faculty members ahead of time to increase their understanding of the many ethnocultural factors, language barriers, and medical needs of the Glades community," said Debbi Cohn Steinkohl, who serves as AMSA faculty advisor and administrative director of the Interdisciplinary Generalist Curriculum (IGC) Program. "Through this interdisciplinary service-learning opportunity, our students were able to experience and appreciate the value of other vital members of the health care team. By working beside one another and through social interactions, our students increased their understanding of the important role played by public health professionals, optometrists, physician assistants, physical therapists, occupational therapists, dentists, and basic scientists."

Despite the blustery weather, many indigent migrant workers braved the conditions to receive free medical screenings and attend insightful lectures presented by NSU-COM faculty. Throughout the day, 128 patients—ranging in age from 4 months to 77 years—were seen by the NSU-COM team. "The majority of the people we examined were predominantly of a Haitian, Mexican, Jamaican, or Nicaraguan background," said Camille Bentley, D.O., who serves as HETC medical

coordinator and assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine. "Whenever we diagnosed a patient with anything from diabetes and hypertension to asthma or optical problems, we referred them to the Palm Beach County Health Department for appropriate follow-up care."

The most serious case detected by the medical team turned out to be a 58-year-old diabetic man who complained of abdominal pain and weight loss. Upon closer examination, the patient was found to have an abnormal mass in his jaw as well as an enlarged prostate and was immediately referred to the county health department. The NSU-COM volunteer medical team utilized 16 classrooms, transforming them into makeshift medical units to perform the examinations and medical screenings. Each area was under the supervision of a licensed physician as well as other appropriately trained individuals.

Funding for the necessary medical supplies was provided through NSU's AHEC/HETC programs and Agouron Pharmaceuticals, which graciously bestowed a \$5,000 unrestricted educational grant. NSU-COM's AHEC Program also provided monies to help offset hotel costs for the participating faculty and students.

The Glades REACH Health Fair was the brainchild of M-2 student Shalomi George, who serves as president of NSU-COM's AMSA chapter. Her extraordinary efforts to coordinate a health fair in a rural community were lauded by an array of students and faculty members, including Steinkohl, who spent nine months working with George on the numerous coordination aspects. "My hat goes off to Shalomi because she was up against so many obstacles, yet she was determined to pull it off," she explained. "The details of what it took to initiate a rural health fair of this

magnitude were incredible. From the very beginning, Shalomi was totally committed to this project. She went to AHEC and convinced them to partner in this, wrote the original proposal, made all the initial and ongoing contacts with the other HPD colleges to get them involved, and coordinated all the room-and-board logistics."

The health fair's success—which also allowed second-year NSU-COM students to fulfill a portion of their IGC COM-Serve Program community service obligations—was a source of obvious pride for George and her AMSA peers, who saw their



Event coordinators included Dr. Camille Bentley, Shalomi George, AHEC Program Director Dr. Steven Zucker, Debbi Cohn Steinkohl, and Shelley Warshaw, who serves as the health careers recruitment coordinator for the Everglades AHEC in West Palm Beach.

Glades Health Fair continued on page 22



The NSU-HPD medical contingent on the steps of Glades Central High School.

dream of a rural health fair in Florida come to sweet fruition. "Collaborating with Belle Glade and the surrounding communities allowed AMSA to manifest its mission of improving health care delivery to all people while involving its members in the social, moral, and ethical obligations as health care professionals," she explained. "We saw a need for service in nearby communities—particularly the migrant populations in the Glades area. We wanted to provide a means for this population to enter a local health system and obtain quality preventive health care. It is so important to develop a bond with these people, so that we may provide them with quality care and enable them to lead healthier, more prosperous lives."

To make the health fair fun for the faculty and students, the weekend also was geared as a mini interdisciplinary HPD retreat, complete with festive meals and engaging activities. "By adding a social component to the weekend, it allowed a true feeling of camaraderie to develop," Dr. Bentley explained. "You get to know the students a little bit better and they get to see you off campus in a different light, interacting with your family. It drew us all closer, and the student feedback we received was terrific."

According to Shelley Warshaw, health careers recruitment coordinator for the Everglades AHEC in West Palm Beach, community response was overwhelmingly positive as well, with many of the patients commenting on the exceptional quality of care that was provided by the NSU-HPD faculty and students. Based on the success of this year's fair, plans are already underway to return again next year and reach an even greater number of migrant farm workers and elderly residents who were unable to access medical services due to the inclement weather.

"Our students and faculty deserve to be commended for going above and beyond the call of duty and devoting their spare time to this local medical mission," Dr. Bentley concluded. "It was a joint effort that had a positive and profound impact on many lives."



Nelda Angelou (center), medical assistant in the Sanford L. Ziff Health Care Center, assists a physician assistant student with a routine finger stick.

NSU-COM Faculty and Staff

Camille Bentley, D.O.
Cyril Blavo, D.O., M.P.H.
James Howell, M.D., M.P.H.
Kenneth Johnson, D.O.
Harold Laubach, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Jessie Legros, M.P.H.
Edward Lulo, M.D.
Charlotte Paolini, D.O.
Edward Packer, D.O.
Robert Perraud, D.O.
Judith Schaffer, D.O.
Sandi Scott-Holman, D.O.
Joseph Stasio, D.O.
Debbi Cohn Steinkohl, M.H.S.A.
Robert Trenchel, D.O., M.P.H.
Steven Zucker, D.M.D., M.D.

Volunteer Physician Preceptors

Lucien Armond, M.D.
Herisson Domond, M.D.
John Geake, D.O.
Heather Lutz, D.O.
Monise Maignan, M.D.
Kenneth McElynn, M.D.
Barrington Owens, M.D.

Julia Shipman, D.O.
David Tolstrup, D.O.

NSU-COM Students

Ryan Adami
Star Anton
Anahita Azharian
Joel Beachkofsky
Jared Berkowitz
David Bingham
Erin Black
Alberto Caban
Christie Campbell
Jesus Castillo
Ulyee Choe
Mark Claglia
Steven Conroy
Rachel Dawson
Ulisses Diaz
Kim Edmonson
Michael Ferraro
Mike Florin
Rupert Galvez
Shalomi George
Elizabeth Gonzalez
Elizabeth Harkness

Melinda Healy
Brent Hutson
Jamie Jones
Sheeja Kanacheril
Ashley Keyes
Nancy Lee
Brad Malehorn
Carmen Marrero
Melissa Mascioli
Jamie Matherly
Sharmili Mathur
Patrick Moran
Nish Patel
Jason Rousseau
Tasleyma Sattar
Matt Schwartz
Rupa Seghal
Lisa Soiffer
Erica Steele
Amber Stephens
Eric Takahashi
Brent Toney
Monica Tucci
Kerry Wheeler
Elizabeth Ziner

Medical Missions to Guatemala Broaden Scope

In January, the College of Osteopathic Medicine made its fourth visit to various impoverished and medically underserved villages in Guatemala as a contingent of 57 volunteers comprising 28 medical students, 21 licensed health care providers, and 8 community volunteers provided medical care to a record 928 patients.

The latest medical mission to Guatemala, which took place January 18-27, was an unqualified success according to Camille Bentley, D.O., director of the Guatemala medical missions and assistant professor of family medicine, because it built on the foundation that had been laid during the previous three missions. Utilizing patient progress notes, Dr. Bentley ascertained that 40 percent of the individuals receiving care were return patients.

One particular case that deeply touched Dr. Bentley during this mission involved an outgoing six-year-old boy in Antigua named Esdras Azmitia who had broken his right elbow a year ago. Because the youngster never received appropriate medical care or physical therapy, his arm had begun to atrophy and will eventually necessitate amputation if corrective measures are not implemented.

Dr. Bentley instructed the boy's parents on how to administer basic physical therapy to maintain nerve conduction and prevent further atrophy. Dr. Bentley's long-term goal is to secure funding and obtain surgical services that will allow her to bring Esdras to the United States and have the elbow surgically repaired.

A month after the medical mission, Dr. Bentley returned to Guatemala for a weeklong public relations campaign with Lurtiz (Larry) A. Jensen, D.A., NSU-COM director of pre-clinical education and immediate past president of DOCARE International, to meet with several notable Guatemalan health care officials. "The purpose of this particular trip was to generate new and strengthen existing relations with individuals representing different levels and areas of public and political relations between NSU-COM, DOCARE International, and Guatemala," stated Dr. Bentley, who also serves as vice president of DOCARE International.

Dr. Bentley's meeting with Dr. Cesar Deleon, who serves as director of the public health program at the

University of San Carlos Medical School in Guatemala City, was especially noteworthy because it could pave the way for a symbiotic and enriching relationship between the two medical schools. "Dr. Jensen and I discussed our mutual interest in working together with students and faculty from a medical school in Guatemala," she explained. "We also discussed the possibility of sharing ideas and collaborating together to secure grant funding for research and work between the two universities."

Other plans call for the establishment of an exchange program that would allow fourth-year NSU-COM students to spend an allotted period of time in Guatemala and permit sixth-year University of San Carlos Medical School students to gain clinical experience in the United States.



During their public relations trip to Guatemala, Drs. Bentley and Jensen had an opportunity to meet with Julio Molina Avilés, the country's vice minister of health.



Dr. Jensen, Dr. Bentley, Phebe Aguilar, and Nery Aguilar, director of medical research for various Guatemalan pharmaceutical companies.

Guatemala continued on page 24

Health Care Providers

Camille Bentley, D.O.
Tasha Bielby, D.O.
Richard D'Amico, D.O.
Karen Daniel, Pharm.D.
Bradley Eisenberg, D.O.
Maribeth Gidley, D.O.
Elisa Ginter, D.O.
Kathy Graham, Pharm.D.
Daniel Kesden, D.O.
Harold Laubach, D.O.
Edward Lulo, D.O.
Eugene Manuel, D.O.
Steve Martin, D.O.
Pattie Murray, R.N.
Ramon Ramirez, D.O.
Jacqueline Romero, D.O.
Mildred Santorufo, D.O.
Setareh Seyedkazemi, Pharm.D.
Joel Spalter, M.D.
Tamara A. Virgilio, P.A.
Kristen Van Zandt, R.N.

Iyla Fonarov (M-4)
Sarah Iannucci (M-3)
Karen Jacobson (M-1)
Cheryl Kohn (M-2)
Julie Levine (M-2)
Erin Martin (M-2)
Carrie Mazer (M-2)
Daniel McGee (M-1)
Cheryl Neely (M-2)
Meghann Pine (M-2)
Rebecca Piotrowski (M-2)
Joseph Purcell (M-2)
Emily Reidy (M-2)
Hazel Robles (M-1)
Tali Rombro (M-3)
Mariusz Rybaltowski (M-1)
Hillary Saxon (M-1)
Rupa Sehgal (M-1)
Taryn Shapiro (M-1)
Josh Solot (M-1)
Jennifer Wilkerson (M-3)

NSU-COM Students

Felicia Borenstein (M-2)
Jennifer Capezzuti (M-2)
Emily Chang (M-3)
Shirley Chen (M-1)
Annie Davidson (M-2)
Thomas Dovidio (M-2)
Robert Ebener (M-3)

Community Volunteers

Claudia Escobar
Victoria Laubach
Olga M. Martinez
Chris Sinigalliano, Ph.D.
Carmella Zampino
Salvatore John Zampino
Sandra Jane Zampino, Ed.D.
Marc Anthony Zampino, Ph.D.



Dr. Bentley hopes to bring Esdras Azmitia, who had broken his right elbow a year ago, to the United States for corrective surgery.



Osteopathic manipulative treatment was utilized quite frequently in treating the Mayan patients.

Medical Mission 2002 to Guatemala



Two faces of Guatemala: From doleful to delight, the indigent children rarely hide their emotions.



A Mayan woman smiles contentedly as one of the student physicians checks her blood pressure.

Student Extraordinaire: Hannan Alsahlani

By Scott Colton
Director of Education Communications

How did a woman who once described herself as the least likely to succeed transform herself into a stellar student and entrepreneur-in-the-making who is both beloved and revered by her peers for concocting entertaining and innovative exam review sessions? In the case of M-2 student Hannan Alsahlani, an innate ability to persevere in the face of immense personal tragedy and turn sorrow into success has spurred her to levels of achievement she never dreamed possible.



Hannan Alsahlani

Since she began matriculating at NSU-COM in 2000, Alsahlani has earned widespread acclaim for her imaginative tutorial sessions and wildly witty exam review packets that utilize mnemonics to reinforce the material all students must memorize and assimilate to succeed in medical school. In a sense, Alsahlani has become the college's unofficial "Pied Piper" because as many as 100 students will devotedly follow her anywhere to attend one of her comprehensive review assemblies.

Alsahlani's stimulating and fun-filled approach to teaching has produced a number of ancillary benefits, including numerous book and video offers from a range of sources, while her undeniable popularity resulted in her earning the 2002 Student D.O. of the Year Award from her peers. However, were it not for a devastating family tragedy that occurred when she was 15, Alsahlani would not even be pursuing a career in osteopathic medicine.

The catastrophic event that helped reshape her future and redefine her priorities occurred when Alsahlani's 17-year-old brother was diagnosed with terminal leukemia. When



Double take: Identical twins Hannan and Eman during one of their hospital volunteer visits.

he suddenly passed away six weeks after the diagnosis was made, Hannan and her twin sister Eman positively channeled their grief into volunteer stints at several South Florida hospitals. "We would go every week to cheer up the patients," said Alsahlani, who is a member of the college's prestigious Sigma Sigma Phi Xi Chapter.

Their visits proved so successful that the sisters actually launched a short-term business venture, which included dressing like clowns and organizing festive birthday parties at various hospitals. Their

ingenuity and compassionate approach soon attracted local media attention, earning the duo exposure in both the *Sun-Sentinel* and *The Miami Herald*. Intrigued by the world of medicine, albeit different disciplines, both sisters garnered scholarships to the University of Miami, where Hannan earned a B.S. degree in biology. Upon graduation, Hannan pursued a master's in biomedical science at NSU while Eman headed north to attend dental school at New York University.

It was during the pursuit of her M.B.S. degree that Alsahlani's nascent knack for tutoring first emerged, much to her surprise. "I had never really taught before, but when I began studying with a partner I would make up mnemonics or clever plays on words," she explained. "Before long, she started inviting more people to join our study group and it simply spread from there. It just kind of caught on and we would study all night, but I didn't think anything of it at the time."

Prior to entering the M-1 class at NSU-COM, Alsahlani and seven other students were selected to participate in a summer fellowship in anatomy, which involved dissecting specimens in the morning and imparting knowledge to the physician assistant students during the afternoon. Because her prior tutoring efforts had been so successful, Alsahlani picked right up where she left off. "I started teaching them with mnemonics and by bringing in props to try and make it more fun. Then other student groups started asking me to tutor them. We would be in the library until 1:00 in the morning or until they kicked us out."

Hannan continued on page 26

Before long, Alsahlani, who was reaping no monetary benefit for her academic benevolence, was even volunteering her Sundays to tutor the physician assistant students. "I really enjoy it, and I get such a sense of satisfaction from seeing that they really get it and are so appreciative," explained Alsahlani, who received numerous tokens of admiration ranging from baked goods and small gifts to a nice-sized cash contribution from the entire class.

Like a boulder gathering speed as it plummets down a mountain, word quickly spread about Alsahlani's engaging tutorials. During her first year as a College of Osteopathic Medicine student, which is normally rife with stress, she was besieged with requests for her teaching services from not only NSU-COM students but also those matriculating at other HPD colleges.

"Once you become a summer fellow the college authorizes you to become an official anatomy tutor for the first-year class. That way each first-year class has a group of tutors to help them out and who know the material," she explained. "I couldn't really do it for free anymore because everyone else who had done the fellowship was charging a fee, so it was like, 'Wow, I can make money out of this.' After the first semester, I started putting together review packets, which I then began sending out to the class."

Although she was receiving a modest hourly fee when she tutored students individually, her group review sessions, which quickly earned legendary status, were free for those who attended. Consequently, as the months passed, Alsahlani's following swelled. Soon, she was providing tutorials in bacteriology, mycology, hematology, cardiology, and other essential curricula areas—much to the delight of her fellow students. "When I started tutoring in the other subjects, like bacteriology, over 100 students showed up for the review session. I was shaking and in shock that so many people had showed up," she admitted. "I kept asking myself, 'What are all these people doing here?'"

"Hannan is a very giving individual, who really cares about everyone's success. Her endless energy and charisma make her a role model and a leader that I admire, as a fellow medical student. Despite the difficult times she has endured over the past year, she always has a kind word of encouragement for me. I can say much more about Hannan, but I will conclude by saying that she is one of a kind!"

Marie Florent, M-2 Student

"As a husband and father, Hannan's tutorials have saved me a tremendous amount of time and thus allowed me to give more time to my family. You definitely do not want to miss Hannan's reviews. She has a unique and outstanding talent in organizing material from our many instructors and putting it in a well-integrated fashion that emphasizes high-yield topics. Hannan's mnemonics are hard to forget because she uses humor and excellent visual aids in order to help students remember important information."

Gershon Fink, M-2 student

Because her private tutorial sessions were proving profitable, Alsahlani could have celebrated by using the money to buy something extravagant for herself or her family. However, due to her altruistic nature, she rarely kept the profits for herself, instead donating the bulk of her earnings to various charitable organizations or college causes like Sigma Sigma Phi's Feed the Homeless Campaign and Medical Mission 2001 to Jamaica. Additionally, because her goal was to make the review sessions as entertaining as possible, Alsahlani used portions of her income to purchase food, prizes, and props for the students.

"I spent a lot of the money on the reviews," admitted Alsahlani, who is currently mulling over several book deals and an anatomy review tape offer based on her clever group tutorials. "I brought in door prizes and candy and cake. And when we covered bacteriology, I went to the toy store and got little bugs and put them all over the desks and put balloons on all the chairs with the name of a bacteria written on them. I wanted to make it as enjoyable as possible because at the end of the semester everyone is worn out. Getting that many students to stay in their chairs for seven hours during a bacteriology session is quite a feat."

It should have been a gloriously gratifying time for Alsahlani, especially since she was reunited with Eman, who had transferred from New York University to NSU's College of Dental Medicine. But just as she was about to start her second year at NSU-COM, her family endured yet another wrenching tragedy when her 48-year-old uncle was diagnosed with bladder cancer, which had spread to his brain. When he died a short time later in Pennsylvania, leaving behind a grieving widow and five children, the pain was almost too much for Alsahlani and her family to bear. "We were there when he passed away, and it was very reminiscent of how my brother had died," she said.

Before any sense of normalcy could be restored, Alsahlani and her family were rocked by yet another major crisis when her father suffered a massive heart attack a mere two weeks after the death of her uncle, which necessitated him to undergo quadruple bypass surgery. "After you go through tragedy after tragedy, you kind of go numb," Alsahlani admitted. "At first you think, 'How am I ever going to smile again?' or 'How am I going to wake up in the morning and go on?' It was an extremely difficult period, but it makes you a stronger person. Everything happens for a reason and it makes you more compassionate. With time, God gives you strength."

Emotional fortitude was something Alsahlani would come to rely on as she struggled to balance weighty family concerns with equally important academic issues. "It was tough for me because I had already missed three weeks of school, and then I had to miss another two weeks. And we were only two months into the first semester of my second year. I would be sitting in a hospital lobby in Pittsburgh while my uncle was dying, and then I would fly back to take an exam."

Alsahlani also felt a responsibility to the students who had

come to rely on her review sessions and were dismayed over her frequent absences. Not surprisingly, the nonstop stress eventually led to what turned out to be a cathartic mini meltdown. "The students were really missing me," she recalled. "I hadn't studied for classes, yet they were

saying, 'Where are you...we need your reviews?' I had never seen the material or attended class, so I just came in one night to give the review. I was really nervous and crying the whole time before the session, but my friends were so supportive. They just said 'go for it,' and it actually turned out well. We ended up studying for five hours, which helped me a lot because it forced me to focus."



Hannan in action during her cardio pharmacology review session.

As her second year as an NSU-COM student draws to a close, Alsahlani is as busy as ever preparing review

sessions for her appreciative peers. "I don't sleep much," admitted the future D.O., who frequently stays up until 5:00 a.m. composing her masterful review packets. "Preparing for the reviews is exhausting, but what keeps me going is the students. After one exam they actually bowed to me. It's so rewarding. It's all about enjoying it and loving what I do. I think that's where I get the energy to work as hard as I do."

"Hannan is blessed with an amazing capability for taking confusing and difficult information and then presenting it in a way that will not only help you get an "A" on your next test, but will actually help you retain the information long-term. She is so dedicated to her teaching that she will sacrifice sleeping and her own study time to teach her fellow classmates. And, although the information is incredibly dull, Hannan is so animated that she can keep your attention for hours. I am not exaggerating when I say that most of what I learned in medical school, I learned from Hannan. My grades improved drastically after I started attending her reviews, and they have continued to remain high in every class we have. There is no limit to what Hannan can do for a student faced with the overwhelming task of learning massive amounts of information in a short period of time. She is a wonderful person and an amazing teacher. And I for one know that I am lucky to have her as a friend and a tutor."

Sousan Zadeh, M-2 Student

"I am a participant at every single review she has given since last year, and to start off let me just say that without her reviews I'd probably be figuring out ways to get back into medical school. I'm sure many other students can attest to that as well. She keeps everyone involved by asking people questions and using repetition of the key information throughout the review. The ultimate talent Hannan possesses is her usage of mnemonics. They're simply amazing! So many times during exams when I got stuck on a question, I was able to remember the information just because I knew her great mnemonics. The fact that she can take such information and teach it to us with such ease is very astonishing to me. I still remember a lot of what I learned in medical school simply by going to her reviews. Hannan is a very caring, warm person, and for someone to dedicate so much of her limited time in learning the material mostly for other student's well-being in their academics is selfless and requires a lot of humility."

Rayan Rouhizad, M-2 Student

Muslim Students Reflect on Post-attack Attitudes

By Scott Colton

Director of Education Communications

The past seven months have been extremely difficult ones for the nation as its collective citizenry continues to deal with feelings ranging from shock and sadness to anger and fear following the events that transpired last September 11. Those feelings of unease have been amplified for the country's vast Muslim population, which has had to deal with increased disdain and discrimination as well as threats of personal retaliation in the ugly post-attack aftermath.

In the following article, a trio of Muslim students address the changes that have occurred in their lives, discuss the true meaning of their Islamic teachings, and share their hopes for peace in a world currently defined by disharmony and detestation.

When reports began filtering through their lecture hall about the terrorist attacks taking place along the East Coast, M-2 students Fatima Ahmed, Rabia Halim, and Azhar Dalal experienced a similar sense of dread, each hoping a Muslim extremist group wasn't responsible for the unspeakable carnage.

As they gathered around television sets in the HPD cafeteria to witness the devastation unfold, Ahmed began feeling extremely vulnerable, especially when it was reported the attacks were indeed perpetrated in the name of Islam. "I was very, very scared," admitted Ahmed, who dresses in the traditional hijab or headscarf garb worn by many Muslim women. "I began thinking about World War II and started thinking extreme thoughts, that the government would round us up and throw us in concentration camps."

Fortunately, one of her Jewish friends noticed Ahmed standing forlornly in the corner and immediately rushed over to offer a few words of encouragement. "My friend came up to me and

asked, 'Are you afraid that people are going to dislike you or not talk to you anymore because of this? Well don't worry because I'll still talk to you.' That kind of support helped a lot."

Fearing an anti-Muslim backlash, Ahmed restricted her normal social activities in the weeks following the attacks, choosing instead to stay close to home. "I definitely became more aware of what was going on around me and what people's perceptions of me were," she admitted. "Right after September 11, I wouldn't go to Publix at night, just because I didn't want to put myself in a situation where people might take their anger out on me. I stayed in my apartment more and only went out with friends."

When she did venture out, her Muslim attire made her an obvious target of attention—and ire. "The people I already knew were extremely supportive and

caring. But I did notice that if I went to the grocery store, more people were staring at me because of my headscarf. Most people never said anything to me, but there was an incident that occurred a few months after the terrorist attacks, when I was

walking in the airport and someone passing by said, 'Arab go home.' It made me feel uncomfortable, of course, but it's a natural response. It hurt me, but I kind of understood what other people were going through. If I was a white person and this had happened, I think I would have had similar reactions."

Dalal was also on the receiving end of a few disparaging words when he recently decided to grow a beard, which labeled him an extremist in the eyes of some people. But the Miami-born Muslim said the negativity he and his family felt in the wake of the attacks was minimal and that most non-Muslims were supportive and sympathetic.

"After September 11, people were telling my mom and sister to take off their hijabs to avoid calling

"People have to understand that we were all victims of the attacks. There were many Muslims who died in the World Trade Center towers. I think people tend to forget that."

Rabia Halim

attention to themselves," he said. "But you can't give into that negativity. You simply have to get on with your life. My sister, who is 11, wears a headscarf when she attends middle school, and she's the only student who does that. After the attacks, some of the kids said things like 'Did you do that?' or 'Were you responsible for that?' But the principal and teachers immediately protected her and the school coordinated a major assembly for the students to help them understand everything."

Halim, a Florida native born in Hollywood, recalled that immediately after the attacks, an anonymous individual sent an inflammatory email to all NSU-COM students about the Qur'an (Islamic holy book) and its teachings. Instead of reacting with anger, Halim and Ahmed penned an eloquent response that addressed the email's contents and condemned "in the harshest terms the cowardly and senseless acts of terror perpetrated against innocent American citizens, brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers."

"People have to understand that we were all victims of the attacks," Halim explained. "There were many Muslims who died in the World Trade Center towers. I think people tend to forget that. After the attacks, it was important for us to educate people, to explain that Islam means peace and submission to God—and that the attacks were totally non-Islamic. The whole point is we believe in one God and that our life on Earth is to please God and be good to other people, to respect the environment and respect each other. It's just like all the other religions."

"I definitely became more aware of what was going on around me and what people's perceptions of me were."

Fatima Ahmed

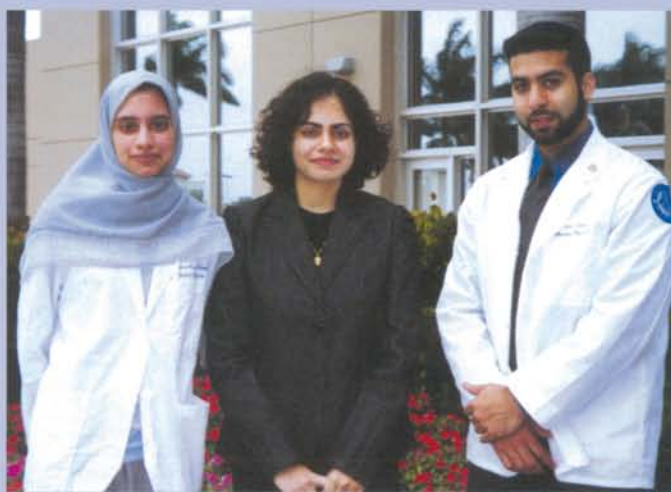
In an attempt to provide further education to NSU students, the undergraduate student organization called IMAN (International Muslim Association at Nova) coordinated an Islam Awareness Week in February, which fostered incisive discussion and generated positive feedback from many of the non-Muslim attendees. "Many non-Muslims and Muslims from HPD attended the events, which included

movies about Islam and lectures about Hajj, which is the pilgrimage to Mecca all Muslims are required to perform once in their lifetime if they can afford it and are healthy enough to travel," Dalal explained.

Stephen Welch, an M-2 student who attended various Islam Awareness Week activities, was impressed with the wealth of knowledge imparted by the organizers and their graciousness to all attendees. "There are two characteristics of Muslims that really stood out to me," he stated. "First, their hospitality toward guests is almost overwhelming. I was made to feel very welcome as a non-Muslim. Secondly, I admire the discipline of Islam's followers, especially the prescribed 5 daily prayers, the 30-day fast during the month of Ramadan, and various components of the Hajj."

"Before September 11, not too many people knew about Islam or its teachings," Dalal stressed. "Since then, I've had a lot of people ask me about Islam and request information about it. The events of last September gave us an opportunity to speak out about what Islam teaches

and help people understand that it's a religion of peace. It helped us educate people, to let them know that the terrorists' actions would not define Islam for us."



Fatima Ahmed, Rabia Halim, and Azhar Dalal.

Student Organization of the Month

"Pediatrics Club"

One laudable trait that defines most NSU-COM student organizations is a fervent commitment to provide outreach efforts to the community. Such is the case with the college's Pediatrics Club, which currently comprises 74 concerned and compassionate first and second-year osteopathic medicine students as well as a sprinkling of physician assistant and occupational therapy representatives.

"The Pediatrics Club is a great organization for our medical students to join because we all have to do pediatric rotations," said Meghann Pine, an M-2 student who serves as president of the Pediatrics Club. "Our major goals are to promote education about pediatric issues, provide opportunities for our members to work with children and learn how to relate to them, and get out into the community and provide various services and programs to needy children. We hold monthly meetings at lunchtime and have lecturers come in to discuss different specialties in the pediatrics field. And we're extremely fortunate to have Dr. Edward Packer (associate professor and chair of the Department of Pediatrics) as our faculty advisor because he is always so enthusiastic about helping us out in terms of finding speakers and providing input about the club. He comes to every meeting and is always willing to get involved whenever we need his help."

The club's dedication to assisting area children is evidenced by its close involvement with several day care centers, including Camp Blanding in Dania as well as Washington Park and Pumpkin Shell 2 in Hollywood. "Camp Blanding is our official adopted daycare center," Pine explained. "We try to do different events with them throughout the year, including the annual Holiday Toy Drive. We visit the center once a month, bring the kids a nutritious snack, and serve as older buddies in case they don't have good role models. We also try to brighten their lives by organizing Easter egg hunts and making Valentine's Day cards."

The Pediatric Club's most ambitious annual project is the Holiday Toy Drive, which provided gifts for approximately 250 children at four South Florida daycare centers last Christmas, including the West Palm Beach HIV/AIDS Pediatric Clinic. Each year, the club members craft a decorative holiday wagon, complete with a tree adorned with an ornament for each child, featuring information such as age, gender, and a gift wish list. The week after Thanksgiving, students, faculty, and staff are afforded an

opportunity to pick a child's name from the tree and purchase a gift from the wish list. The presents are then wrapped at a dinner function held in the HPD Dining Room and delivered to the daycare centers the week before Christmas by Pediatric Club members. "We go to each of the centers and deliver the gifts personally," Pine stated.

"We had a Santa Claus suit donated last year, and our treasurer, Howard Slomko, delivered them in big bags, and we brought in cookies and juice as a surprise for the kids."



A happy child receives his gift from Santa (AKA Pediatrics Club Treasurer Howie Slomko).

In 2002, the Pediatrics Club will be partnering with the Student Associate Auxiliary (SAA) on a progressive new suicide prevention program targeting high-school students. "We are joining forces with the SAA, which consists of the wives, husbands, boyfriends, and girlfriends of NSU-COM students, to establish a suicide prevention program that will enable us to go into high schools and talk to the students about where they can get help," she explained. "We are going to give the students a card with a yellow ribbon on it, which they can discreetly give to their teacher when they feel suicidal. Instead of being scared to explain why they're feeling this way or being afraid of having to go to someone directly, all they have to do is go up to their teacher and give them the card with the yellow ribbon on it. And that way the teacher knows that student needs help and is contemplating suicide."

Given the heavy course load that is such a prominent feature of medical school, it makes the extracurricular contributions of the Pediatrics Club members that much more praiseworthy. "It is easy to get all caught up in the schoolwork and studying, and you tend to forget the real reason why you went into medicine or wanted to be a doctor," admitted Pine, who plans to pursue a career in pediatrics oncology after she graduates in 2004. "But I truly feel that our community involvement helps all of us stay focused. If we didn't do community projects, we wouldn't be able to stay motivated to study and sit through lectures for all those hours."

2001-02 Pediatric Officers
Edward Packer, D.O., Faculty Advisor
Meghann Pine, President
Thomas Dovidio, Vice President
Howard Slomko, Treasurer
Alberto Caban, Secretary

Alumni Corner

Alumni Association Executive Committee

2002-2003 Officers

Dr. Jeffrey Grove, President - Class of 1990
Dr. Glenn Moran, President Elect - Class of 1988
Dr. Kenneth Johnson, Vice President - Class of 1991
Dr. Steven Cimerberg, Secretary - Class of 1987
Dr. Ronald Renuart, Treasurer - Class of 1990

Past Presidents

Dr. John Geake - Class of 1993
Dr. Tamer Gozleveli - Class of 1987
Dr. Michael Gervasi - Class of 1987
Dr. Orlando Garcia - Class of 1994
Dr. Daniel McBath - Class of 1990
Dr. Isidro Pujol - Class of 1994

Committee Chairmen

Dr. Jeffrey Grove - Program Chair
Dr. Daniel McBath - Fundraising Chair
Dr. Tamer Gozleveli - Webmaster
Dr. Michael Gervasi - Editor

Alumni Web Page: <http://medicine.nova.edu>

Join our Listserv! (listserv@list.nova.edu or nsucom_alumni@list.nova.edu).

We are encouraging all alumni to post their addresses on Listserv to build an Internet directory.

You may also access Listserv at the Alumni Web Page by clicking on the "Join Our Listserv" link

Alumni Association Fund Honor Roll

In the spring of 1999, NSU-COM launched an alumni-based fundraising effort to generate dollars that would be used to create an endowment fund to reduce future tuition costs for NSU-COM students and produce a funding pool that would be utilized for discretionary purposes as determined by the Alumni Association Executive Committee. If you would like to learn more about the Alumni Association Fund, please contact the Office of Alumni Affairs at (954) 262-1029.

Following are the altruistic individuals who have contributed to NSU-COM's Alumni Association Fund since its inception:

Dean's Council (\$1,000-\$4,999)

\$2,000 Contributors

Dr. John Geake, Jr. (class of 1993)
Dr. Jeffrey Grove (class of 1990)

\$1,000 Contributors

Dr. Tamer Gozleveli (class of 1987)
Dr. Gregory James (class of 1988)
Dr. Joel Rush (class of 1985)

500 Club (\$500-\$999)

Dr. Kenneth Johnson (class of 1991)
Dr. Isidro Pujol (class of 1994)
Dr. Stanley S. Zimmelman (class of 1991)

250 Club (\$250-\$499)

Dr. Joseph Corcoran (class of 1996)
Dr. Tyler Cymet (class of 1988)
Dr. Armando L. Hassun, Jr. (class of 1992)
Dr. Robert Klein (class of 1991)
Dr. John H. Potomski, Jr.
Dr. Gregory Serfer (class of 1997)

Century Club (\$100-\$249)

Dr. Michael Baron (class of 1988)
Dr. Kenneth E. Bresky (class of 1992)
Dr. Charles Chodorow (class of 1989)
Dr. Richard Cottrell (class of 1990)
Dr. Alan David (class of 1992)
Dr. Bruce David (class of 1988)
Dr. John Gordon (class of 1992)
Dr. Thomas Green (class of 1998)
Dr. Jennifer Hayes (class of 1986)
Dr. Richard Herman (class of 1989)
Dr. Sharon Johnston (class of 1993)
Dr. Frances M. Mally (class of 1993)
Dr. Merideth Norris (class of 2000)
Dr. Mitchell Pace (class of 1987)
Dr. Ronald J. Renuart (class of 1990)
Dr. Robert Sammartino (class of 1990)
Dr. Theodore A. Spevack (class of 1985)
Dr. Donald Teplitz (class of 1985)
Dr. Charles A. Wilson (class of 1996)
Dr. Susan Yahia (class of 1991)

Friends (\$99 or less)

Dr. John G. Allred (class of 1997)
Dr. Deirdra Bergman (class of 1985)
Dr. Andrew Biondo (class of 2000)
Dr. Alice F. Blavo (class of 1994)
Dr. David Brown (class of 1987)
Dr. Nai-li Chen (class of 1985)
Dr. Christopher Davis (class of 1989)
Dr. Maria Ruiz Harris (class of 1996)
Dr. Joseph Hodge (class of 1987)
Dr. James D. Landreau (class of 1998)
Dr. Sheryl Pearlman Movsas (class of 1992)
Dr. Steven and Carolyn Newman
Dr. Hue Nguyen-Ngo (class of 1989)
Dr. Lourdes Pelaez-Echevarria (class of 1994)
Dr. Marcos Rejtman (class of 1994)
Dr. Susan Sager (class of 1989)
Dr. Patrick Sayavong (class of 1992)
Dr. Lawrence Schwartz (class of 1990)
Dr. Sandi Scott-Holman (class of 1993)
Dr. Stuart Shalit (class of 1990)
Dr. Cindy S. Marika Srebnick (class of 1987)
Dr. Richard Thacker (class of 1992)
Dr. Linda Tripodis-Murray (class of 1988)
Dr. Todd Trites

Alumni Spotlight

Joel Rush, D.O. – Class of 1985

Member, Dean's Alumni Advisory Council

Like so many physicians who were passionate about pursuing another career course before being bitten by the osteopathic bug, Joel Rush, D.O., seemed destined to make his mark in a decidedly different field after he earned his bachelor's degree in computer science engineering from Washington University in St. Louis Missouri, in 1977.

But the 1985 NSU-COM alumnus, who originally hails from New York City, eventually had a change of heart and was accepted into the inaugural class at Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1981. Following graduation, Dr. Rush completed his internship at Cuyahoga Falls General Hospital in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, and embarked on a comprehensive, multifaceted orthopedic residency program. In 1990, after honing his skills at several medical facilities, he completed his orthopedic residency at Cuyahoga Falls, serving as chief resident in 1989-90.

Over the ensuing 12 years, Dr. Rush has carved out a reputation as one of the premier osteopathic physicians in Florida. In addition to establishing his own practice—Park Place Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation—Dr. Rush has been actively involved with a range of organizations, including the American Osteopathic Association, Broward County Medical Association, Florida Osteopathic Medical Association, and the American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics.

Dr. Rush, who found marital bliss with his lovely wife Beth in 1984, is board certified by the American Osteopathic Board of Orthopaedic Surgeons. He also was designated as a fellow of the American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics and as a diplomate of the National Board of Examiners for Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons. From 1996-98, he also found time to serve as chief of staff of Florida Medical Center South in Plantation, Florida.

Although it's been 17 years since Dr. Rush—an avid downhill skier—graduated from his osteopathic alma mater, he has maintained strong ties with the college, working as a clinical assistant professor of surgery and serving as a valued member of the Dean's Alumni Advisory Council. In 2000, Dr. Rush received another extremely lofty honor when he was elected to the NSU Health Professions Division Board of Governors, making him the youngest member of this prestigious group—and the only NSU-COM alumni representative. In addition

to running his busy practice at two South Florida locations, Dr. Rush serves as program director of the NSU-COM Orthopedic Residency Program at Parkway Regional Medical Center in North Miami Beach. "Joel's dedication to the osteopathic profession is exemplified by the fact that he initiated and implemented the college's orthopedic residency program at Parkway Regional in 2001," said Howard Neer, D.O., who serves as associate dean of alumni affairs.

"A program of this type takes a great deal of time, energy, and effort to establish, and Joel has done a masterful job of coordinating all program facets," he added. "In addition, his contributions to both the HPD Board of Governors and the Dean's Alumni Advisory Council are greatly appreciated because he brings ideas and perspectives that are unique to both groups."



Beth and Joel Rush, D.O.



The Rush's are proud "parents" of two adorable Labrador retrievers.

Alumni Reunion Educates, Entertains Attendees

The Sixth Annual NSU-COM Alumni Reunion and Continuing Medical Education Program, held February 1-3 at the Hyatt Pier Sixty-Six Resort in Fort Lauderdale, provided attendees with a chance to catch up with old friends, celebrate the contributions of long-time NSU-COM staff member Mary Smith Allegro, and attend various CME sessions. An additional "Alumni Seminar at Sea," featuring 11.5 hours of CME credits, was provided during a post-reunion cruise held February 3-10 on the new Costa Atlantica super ship.

Approximately 130 well-wishers showed up for the alumni banquet, where Smith Allegro, who serves as the acting director of student services, was presented with the Alumni Association's inaugural Living Tribute Award. The accolade, which was established to honor outstanding faculty/staff members and administrators who have made significant contributions to the college and the osteopathic profession, proved to be a fitting tribute to Smith Allegro, who has been involved with the College of Osteopathic Medicine since 1980.

Other event highlights included significant recognition for the class of 1992 and the selection of new Alumni Association Executive Committee officers. The 2002-03 slate of officers is as follows:

- President: Jeffrey Grove, D.O.
- President Elect: Glenn Moran, D.O.
- Vice President: Kenneth Johnson, D.O.
- Secretary: Steven Cimerberg, D.O.
- Treasurer: Ronald Renuart, D.O.



Chancellor Terry and Dean Silvagni pose with alumni from the class of 1992.



Attendees at the alumni reception include (clockwise from left): Elisa Ginter, D.O.; Bernardo Villanueva; Peter Cohen, D.O.; Robert Klein, D.O.; Esther Cohen; Ellen and John Geake, D.O.



Mary Smith Allegro celebrates her well-deserved honor with husband Joseph.



Sharing a quiet moment with Chancellor Terry are Jeffrey Grove, D.O., and Robert Blackburn, D.O.



Dianna Silvagni, J.D., dances up a storm with husband Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O., Pharm.D.



Mary Smith Allegro receives her Living Tribute Award from Alumni Association President Isidro Pujol, D.O., as Dr. Silvagni looks on.



Howard Neer, D.O., associate dean of alumni affairs, poses with his stylish wife Gloria.



Ronnie and Robert Oller, D.O., chief executive officer of NSU's Health Care System; Chancellor Morton Terry, D.O., and wife Geraldine.

Staff Snapshot

Getting to Know: Mary Smith Allegro

Acting Director, Office of Student Services

Mary Smith Allegro, who was the inaugural recipient of the NSU-COM Alumni Association's Living Tribute Award in February, is a woman who epitomizes the enviable traits of style, grace, and compassion.

Over the past 40 years, Mary has shared a nurturing bond with the osteopathic profession that began with her affiliation with Osteopathic General Hospital (the forerunner of NSU-COM) and continues in her current role as acting director in the college's Office of Student Services.

She launched her career in 1961 at Osteopathic General Hospital in North Miami Beach as a switchboard operator. Impressed with her abilities and work ethic, hospital administrators promoted Mary to office manager, where she was responsible for 50 employees in the Admissions and Business Office. Over the next few years, she became known as "Medicare Mary" because of her understanding of the Medicare system and her perpetual willingness to help patients and physicians with their Medicare billing issues.

Her friendly demeanor and outgoing personality earned her many close friends and admirers on the hospital staff, including a certain doctor named Morton Smith, who she married in 1970. In 1980, Mary's enthusiasm for the profession blossomed further when she began working at Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine in the role of "Girl Friday," assisting with admissions and financial aid and serving as secretarial support to Drs. Morton Terry and Arnold Melnick. "I was excited to become a part of helping to get the school started," she explained. "That was when I realized how rewarding it was to be a part of these eager young people's lives."

Dr. Smith and Mary were known affectionately by all the students as Dean Smith and Mother Mary. Over

the years, they frequently opened their home and hearts and invited out-of-town student applicants to spend the night at their residence. The students also knew they had a friendly place to celebrate holidays and enjoy a delicious meal if circumstances prevented them from returning home. On one memorable occasion, the couple entertained 52 guests for Passover dinner. To say the students were truly a part of their family would be a vast understatement.



Mary Smith Allegro

Dr. Smith, who was a member of the college's Board of Trustees, initially served as director of the Opa Locka Clinic before transferring to the main campus to become associate dean of student affairs. He and Mary were married for 30 fulfilling years until his untimely death three years ago. When new schools were added throughout the 1980's, resulting in the formation of Southeastern University of the Health Sciences, Mary's loyalty and innate abilities earned her a promotion to registrar of the university. She served in that capacity until 1994 when Nova University and Southeastern University of the Health Sciences merged to become Nova Southeastern University.

In 1995, she received the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association's prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award for her countless contributions to the osteopathic profession. To date, Mary is the first and only non-D.O. to receive this lofty honor.

Mary has a son and daughter-in-law, Michael and Patricia of Pembroke Pines, Florida, a daughter and son-in-law, Brenda and Jason, in Denver, Colorado, and another son Mark, who passed away in 1993. She has 11 stepchildren and 7 grandchildren. Mary is happily remarried to Joseph Allegro, who wholeheartedly supports her love of the osteopathic profession and the students that play such a major role in her life.

MARY SMITH ALLEGRO

Reasons I enjoy working at NSU-COM:

Because of the interaction I have with the students. It's a pleasant place to be, and the students, faculty, and staff have been a part of my life for so many years that I can't imagine doing anything else.

What did you do professionally before joining the NSU-COM staff?

I worked as a pathology technician for the American Cancer Society before joining the business office staff at Palmetto General Hospital (formerly known as Cloverleaf). I was then hired to work for Osteopathic General Hospital in North Miami Beach. When Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine was established, I helped Drs. Morton Terry, Arnold Melnick, and Albert Weiner set up the school.

Greatest achievement in life:

Personally, being a proud mother and grandmother would rate at the top of the list. Professionally, I'm honored to have won two prestigious awards: the recent NSU-COM Living Tribute Award and the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association's Lifetime Achievement Award.

My coworkers would be surprised to know this about me:

I am basically a shy person.

Favorite way to unwind when not at work:

I enjoy simple pleasures like a good glass of wine, walking on the beach, riding my bike, reading, watching television, and going out on the weekend to dance.

If I won the lottery, I would:

Pay off all my children's bills (as well as mine). Then I would help the Homes for Battered Wives organization and do what I could personally for those poor lost souls who have drug problems—two situations I can personally relate to.

The most frightening thing that ever happened to me:

Waking up on June 25, 1998, finding myself alone for the first time in my life, and suddenly realizing that I was not the strong individual I had always believed I was.

What makes you happiest in life?

Seeing my family healthy and happy. Having my husband there, with me and for me. Being there for my husband and trying to show him how grateful I am to him for making me live again. To know I have had so many wonderful people in my life and that God has given me a great life.

When I retire, I plan to:

Retirement is not a word in my vocabulary right now. But if I do retire, my husband and I plan to travel. He would like to take me to Italy, but since I'm not into air or water transportation, we will probably have to wait until they build a bridge from the United States to Europe.

Three words that best describe me:

Happy, caring, and loving.



Mary enjoys a slow dance with husband Joseph.



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